BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

INDIAN INHERITANCE

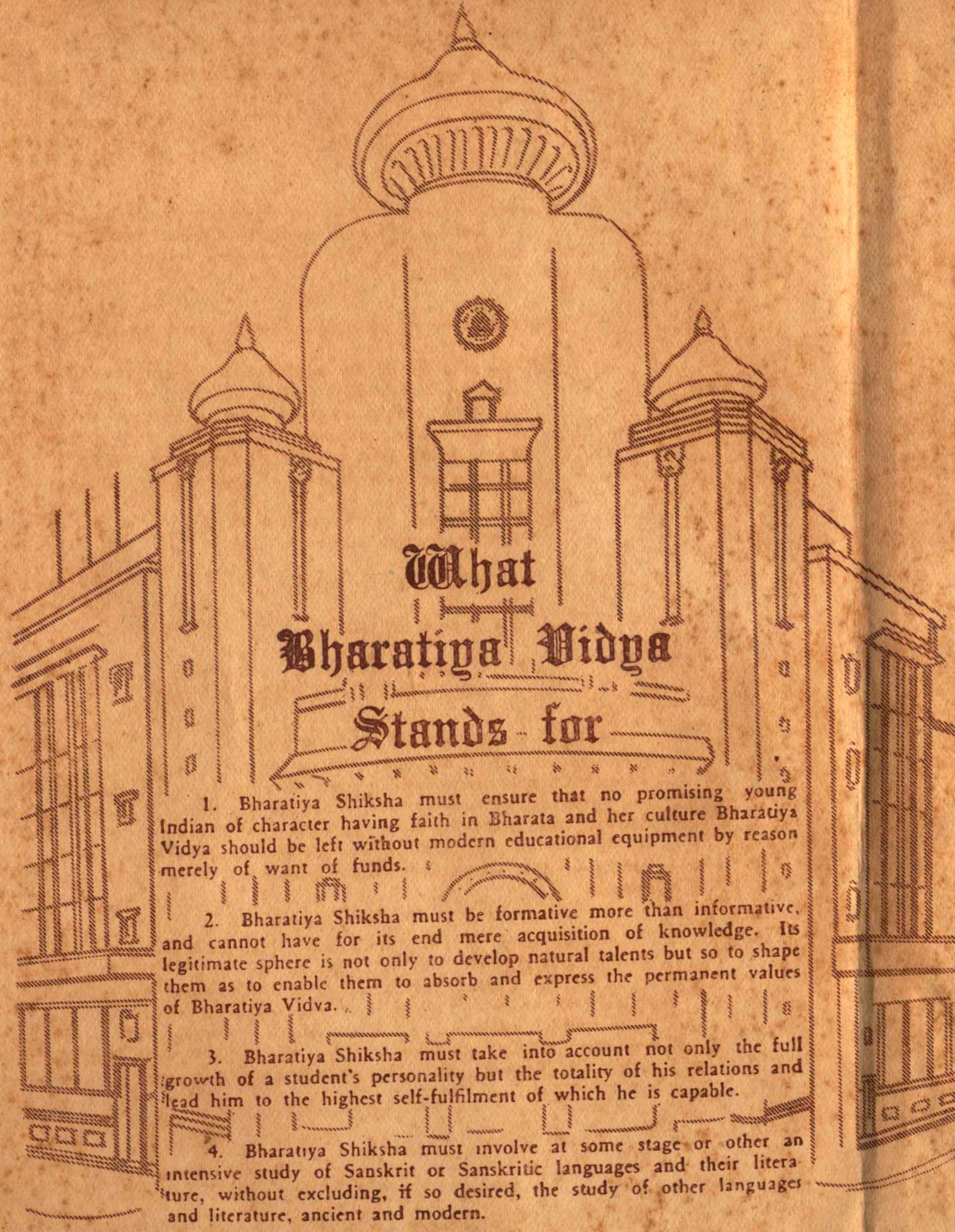
VOL II

ARTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI
N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY



What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

1. Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

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5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

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(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

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(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—*Rigveda*, I-89-i

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35

INDIAN INHERITANCE
VOL. II

ARTS, HISTORY
AND
CULTURE

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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

INDIAN INHERITANCE

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ARTS, HISTORY
AND
CULTURE

1956
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
CHAUPATTY, BOMBAY

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First Edition, May, 1956
Reprinted, July, 1956

Price Rs. 1-12-0, Sh. 3/-; $ 0.85

PRINTED IN INDIA
BY P. H RAMAN AT THE ASSOCIATED ADVERTISERS AND PRINTERS LTD., 505, ARTHUR
ROAD, TARDEO, BOMBAY 7, AND PUBLISHED BY S. RAMAKRISHNAN, REGISTRAR
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY 7

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 1-12-0.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it; the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life; a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita,* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI:
3rd October 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

FOREWORD

I HAVE, on several occasions, noted the fact that the study of Indian history and culture is being neglected in our Universities. I equally consider it a part of the equipment of our educated men that not only should they be emotionally aware of the cultural heritage of our land, but should also develop a spiritual kinship with it.

Article 5 of the basic objective of the Bhavan runs as follows:—

> "The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process."

The Vice-Chancellors' conference of U.P. Universities also made a recommendation that arrangements should be made in the Universities and the affiliated Colleges to start a regular course of lectures on Indian Culture. The principal difficulty in prescribing these courses was the lack of any book dealing with the different aspects on the Indian inheritance as viewed by leading modern writers, available at a price within the means of teacher or student.

The preparation and publication of such a book was a difficult task, which I am glad to say the Bhavan willingly agreed to undertake.

I am greatly indebted to my co-Editor of the Book University, Sri N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar, and to my friends Sri Humayun Kabir, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Dr. K. M. Panikkar, Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, Professor Abdul Majeed of the Jamia Millia, Dr. A. D. Pusalker, Asst. Director and Head of the Dept. of Ancient Indian History in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Dr. Asoke Majumdar, Professor of History in the Bhavan's College, for helping me in making the selections for such a book. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee rendered continuous assistance in preparing the volumes. The burden of going through all the selected passages and editing them to fit into the plan of the book fell on Dr. Asoke Majumdar. Dr. A. D. Pusalker was also good enough to help in preparing the volume.

On behalf of the Bhavan, I gratefully acknowledge the debt it owes to the learned authors, among whom it has the honour to include such distinguished authors as Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Sri Rajagopalachari. Our acknowledgements are also due to several publishers who have given the Bhavan permission to include in this work extracts from books published by them.

The Bhavan is also indebted to the Ramakrishna Mission and Sri Aurobindo Ashram for their permission to publish extracts from the works of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo respectively.

I also acknowledge with thanks the help which has enabled the Bhavan, departing from the standard price of Re. 1/12/- for each of the Book University volumes, to place the first and only edition of these volumes on the market at the reduced price of Re. 1/4/- per volume. We hope that this reduced price will bring the book within easy reach of the students of the Universities in India.

As this book had its origin in the need of the Universities of Uttar Pradesh, of which I happen to be Chancellor, the Bhavan has agreed to reserve 3,000 copies of each volume at the reduced price for teachers and students of these Universities.

Raj Bhavan,
Naini Tal.
July 1, 1955.

K. M. MUNSHI

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CONTENTS

PAGE

General Editor's Preface v

Foreword by K. M. Munshi ix

SECTION I: ARTS

I. Indian Music 3
by Rev. H. A. Popley

II. Indian Dance: The Background 19
by Rukmini Devi

III. Indian Dance: Theory & Practice 28
by A. K. Majumdar

IV. Art and Architecture 42
by E. B. Havell

(1) Sanchi
(2) Amaravati
(3) Ellora
(4) Ajanta
(5) Taj Mahal

V. Mughal Architecture 61
by Rene Grousett

VI. Indian Painting 66
by E. B. Havell

VII. The Moral Role of Indian Art 71
by Radha Kamal Mukherjee

SECTION II: CULTURE AND HISTORY

VIII. The Fundamental Unity of India 85
by Radha Kumud Mookerji

IX. The Unity of Indian Religion 94
by Sri Aurobindo

X. The Continuity of Indian Culture 105
by Jawaharlal Nehru

XI. Epochs of Indian Culture 112
by K. M. Munshi

XII. Hindu Renaissance in Middle Ages 124
by K. M. Panikkar

XIII. Hindu Muslim Adjustments 132
by Rajendra Prasad

XIV. The Classical Age 142
by K. M. Munshi

XV. The Age of Imperial Kanauj 154
by K. M. Munshi

XVI. South India 168
by K. M. Panikkar

XVII. The Sultanate of Delhi 182
by Baini Prashad

XVIII. The Mughal Empire 195
by Baini Prashad

XIX. India and The World 213
by R. C. Majumdar

XX. Indian Colonies in the Far East 227
by R. C. Majumdar

Acknowledgement 243

Index 245

SECTION I

ARTS

I

INDIAN MUSIC

THE beginnings of Indian music are lost in the beautiful and fanciful legends of gods and goddesses who were supposed to be its authors and patrons. The goddess Sarasvati is always represented as the goddess of art and learning, and she is usually pictured as seated on a white lotus with a *vina,* lute, in one hand, playing it with another, a book in the third hand and a necklace of pearls in the fourth.

The technical word for music throughout India is the word *sangita,* which originally included dancing and the drama as well as vocal and instrumental music. The god Shiva is supposed to have been the creator of this threefold art and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe.

In Hindu mythology the various departments of life and learning are usually associated with different *rishis* and so to one of these is traced the first instruction that men received in the art of music. Bharata *rishi* is said to have taught the art to the heavenly dancers—the Apsarases—who afterwards performed before Shiva. The *rishi* Narada, who wanders about on earth and heaven, singing and playing on his *vina,* taught music to men. Among the inhabitants of Indra's heaven we find bands of musicians. The Gandharvas are the singers, the Apsarases the dancers, and the Kinnaras centaur-like performers on musical instruments. From the name Gandharva has come the title *Gandharva-Veda* for the art of music.

Among the early legends of India there are many concerning music. The following is an interesting one from the *Adbhuta-Ramayana* about Narada *rishi,* which combines criticism with appreciation.

Once upon a time the great *rishi* Narada thought within himself that he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building, in which were numerous men and women weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the *ragas* and the *raginis,* created by Mahadeva; but that as a *rishi* of the name of Narada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilled in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken and that, unless Mahadeva or some other skilful person would sing them properly, there was no hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Narada, ashamed, kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven.

The *Vedic Index* shows a very wide variety of musical instruments in use in Vedic times. Instruments of percussion are represented by the *dundubhi,* an ordinary drum; the *adambara,* another kind of drum; *bhumi-dundubhi,* an earth drum made by digging a hole in the ground and covering it with hide; *vanaspati,* a wooden drum; *aghati,* a cymbal used to accompany dancing. Stringed instruments are represented by the *kandavina,* a kind of lute; *kakari,* another lute, *vana,* a lute of hundred strings; and the *vina,* the present instrument of that name in India. This one instrument alone is sufficient evidence of the development to which the art had attained even in those early days. There are also a number of wind instruments of the flute variety, such as the *tunava,* a wooden flute; the *nadi,* a reed flute; *bakura,* whose exact shape is unknown. "By the time of the *Yajur-Veda* several kinds of professional musicians appear to have arisen; for lute players, drummers, flute players and conch blowers are mentioned in the list of callings."

That vocal music had already got beyond the primitive stage may be concluded from the somewhat complicated method of chanting the *Sama-Veda,* which probably goes back to the Indo-Iranian age. These hymns of the *Rik* and *Sama-Vedas* are the earliest examples we have of words set to music, unless we except the *Zendavesta,* which may have been chanted. The *Sama-Veda* was sung according to very strict rules, and present day *Samagahs* —temple singers of the *Saman*—claim that the oral tradition which they have received goes back to those ancient times. The *Chhandogya* and the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads* (*c.* 600 B.C.) both mention the singing of the *Sama-Veda* and the latter also refers to a number of musical instruments.

One of the earliest references to music is found in the grammarian Panini. In his comments upon the root —*nrit*—to dance—he mentions two persons named Silalin and Krishashvin as the authors of two sets of *sutras* on dancing.

The earliest reference to musical theory seems to begin with the *Rikpratishakhya* (*c.* 400 B.C.) which mentions the three voice registers and seven notes of the gamut. It is interesting to find that just before this time, Pythagoras in Greece (*c.* 510 B.C.) worked out the musical system of the Greeks.

In the *Ramayana* mention is frequently made of the singing of ballads, which argues very considerable development of the art of music. The poem composed by the sage Valmiki is said to have been sung before King Rama by Lava and Kusha. The author of the *Ramayana* often makes use of musical similes. The humming of the bees reminded him of the music of stringed instruments, and the thunder of the clouds of the beating of the *mridanga.*

The *Ramayana* also mentions the *jatis,* which seem to have done duty for the *ragas* in ancient times. They seem to have been seven in number and may perhaps have begun on each of the seven notes of the gamut. Among the musical instruments mentioned the following are the most important: *bheri, dundubhi, mridanga, pataha, ghata, panava,* and *dindima* among the drums; *mudduka* (brass trumpet) and *adambara* (clarionet) among wind instruments; a *vina* played either with the bow or with a plectrum—the *vina* being the name for all stringed instruments.

The *Mahabharata* speaks of the seven *svaras* and also of the *Gandhara Grama,* the ancient third mode. The theory of consonance is also alluded to.

The *Mahajanaka Jataka* mentions the four great sounds (*parama-maha-shabda*) which were conferred as an honour by the Hindu kings on great personages. In these the drum is associated with various kinds of horn, gong and cymbals. These were sounded in front of a chariot which was occupied, but behind one which was empty. The car used to go slowly round the palace and up what was called 'the kettle-drum road.' At such a time they sounded hundreds of instruments so that 'it was like the noise of the sea'. The *Jataka* also records how Brahmadatta presented a mountain hermit with a drum, telling him that if he beat on one side his enemies would run away and if upon the other they would become his firm friends.

In the Tamil book *Purananuru* and *Pattupattu* (c. A.D. 100-200) the drum is referred to as occupying a position of very great honour. It had a special seat called *murasukattil,* and a special elephant, and was treated almost as a deity. One of the poets tells us, marvelling at the mercy of the King, "how he sat unwittingly upon the drum couch and yet was not punished". Three kinds of drum are mentioned in these books: the battle drum, the judgment drum, and the sacrificial drum. The battle drum was regarded with the same veneration that regiments used to bestow upon the regimental flag in the armies of Europe and the capture of the drum meant the defeat of the army. One poet likens the beating of the drum to the sound of a mountain torrent. Another thus celebrates the virtues of the drummer:

> For my grandsire's grandsire, his grandsire's grandsire
> Beat the drum. For my father, his father did the same.
> So he for me. From duties of his clan he has not swerved.
> Pour forth for him one other cup of palm tree's purest wine.

The early Tamil literature makes much mention of music. The *Paripadel* (*c.* A.D. 100-200) gives the names of some of the *svaras* and mentions the fact of there being seven *Palai* (ancient Dravidian modes). The *yal* is the peculiar instrument of the ancient Tamil land. No specimen of it exists today. It was evidently something like the *vina* but not the same instrument, as the poet Manikkavachakar (*c.* A.D. 500-700) mentions both in such a way as to indicate two different instruments. Some of its varieties are said to have had over thousand strings. The *Silappadikaram* (A.D. 300), mentions the drummer, the flute player, and the *vina* as well the *yal,* and also has specimens of early Tamil songs. This book contains some of the earliest expositions of the Indian musical scale, giving the seven notes of the gamut and also a number of the modes and *ragas* in use at that time. The names given to the notes are not those current in the present day and are with one exception pure Tamil words. *Tiva-karam,* a Jain lexicon of the same period, gives quite a lot of information about early Dravidian music. It mentions two kinds of *ragas;* complete or heptatonic, and transilient or hexatonic and pentatonic, which were called respectively *Pan* and *Tiram;* it gives the twenty-two *shrutis,* which it calls *matra;* the Tamil names of the seven *svaras* with the equivalent Sanskrit sol-fa intials, (*Sa Ri Ga etc.*) ; the seven Dravidian modes called *palai;* four kinds of *yal* and the names of twenty-nine *pans,* some of which are still found among the primary *ragas* of southern India. All this as well as frequent references to the science of music and to musical performances, both vocal and instrumental, in the Tamil books of this and succeeding periods makes it clear that musical culture had reached a high level among the Dravidian peoples of South India in the early centuries of our era.

The oldest detailed exposition of Indian musical theory which has survived the ravages of ants and the fury of men is found in a treatise called *Natya Shastra* or the science of dancing, said to have been composed by the sage Bharata. The date of this book is usually accepted as the early part of the sixth century. It is stated elsewhere that previous to this Bharata had composed the *Natya Sutra* or Aphorisms on Dancing, but these have not survived. There is only one chapter of the *Natya Shastra* (Ch. 25) which deals with music proper. This contains a detailed exposition of the *svaras, shrutis, gramas, murchhanas, jatis.* While the principles of his theory are still active in Indian music, the details of his system belong to the past and are not easily intelligible to the present generation.

An inscription found at Kudumiyamalai in the Pudukottai State of the Madras Presidency, which seems to belong to the seventh century, has many references to music. It mentions seven *jatis* and a few of the *shrutis* as well as the seven *svaras*. The words *'antara'* and *'kakali'* are found describing respectively the sharp *shrutis* of *Ga* and *Ni*, which is one of the peculiarities of the Southern nomenclature to-day. It is suggested that the inscription is really a piece for the *Samagah* to sing and that the peculiar marks on many of the note signs may be intended to indicate points of *Saman* singing.

The *Narada Shiksha,* wrongly connected with the name of the great *rishi,* was probably composed between the tenth and twelfth century. It shows considerable development upon the *Natya Shastra* in its *raga* system and in a number of matters agrees with the Kudumiyamalai inscription where that disagrees with the next important treatise, the *Sangita-Ratnakara.* Some scholars think that the *Narada Shiksha* comes much later than the twelfth century.

II

The first north Indian musician whom we can definitely locate both in time and place is Jayadeva, who lived at the end of the twelfth century. He was born at Kendula near Bolpur. Kendula still celebrates an annual fair at which the best musical pieces are regularly performed. Jayadeva wrote and sung the *Gita Govinda,* a series of songs descriptive of the amours of Krishna, and so belongs to the number of India's lyrical songsters connected with the *bhakti* revival. Though each song has the name of the *raga* and *tala* to which it was sung these are not intelligible to-day to Indian musicians. At that time these songs were known as *Prabandhas.* The *Gita Govinda* is a charming lyrical composition, as may be realized to some degree in an English translation of it by Sir Edwin Arnold under the name of *The Indian Song of Songs.* In these songs Radha pours forth her yearning, her sorrow and her joy and Krishna assures her of his love.

We come now to the greatest of ancient Indian musical authorities and one who still inspires reverence in the minds of India's musicians. He was called Sharngadeva and lived in the former half of the thirteenth century (A.D. 1210-1247), at the court of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri in the Deccan. At that time the Maratha empire extended to the river Kaveri in the south, and it is probable that Sharngadeva had come into contact with the music of the south as well as with that of the north. His work, the *Sangita-Ratnakara* shows many signs of this contact. It is possible that he is endeavouring to give the common theory which underlies both systems. The result is that a great deal of controversy has arisen as to the exact system described in the book and even as to the reading of the *ragas* which he describes. No scholar has been able to give a thoroughly satisfactory account of these. The work deals with the whole range of musical form and musical composition and gives a very detailed account of ancient musical theory. It also mentions a number of musical writers between Bharata and the author, but none of their works survive to-day. The fundamental scale (*shuddha raga*) of Sharngadeva is *Mukhari,* the modern *Kanakangi*, which is the *shuddha* scale of Carnatic music to-day.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are the most important in the development of the Northern School. It was the time of the Muhammadan conquest. Many of the Emperors did a great deal to extend the practice of music and most of them had musicians attached to their court. From this time dates the introduction of Persian modes into Indian music, and we also find the differentiation of the northern and southern schools becoming more marked. Amir Khusrau was a famous singer at the court of Sultan Ala-ud-din (A.D. 1295-1316). Muhammadan historians relate that, when the Moghuls completed the conquest of the Deccan they took back with them to the North many of the most famous Southern musicians, in the same way as they took toll of the Indian architects and sculptors for their new buildings.

The *Ragatarangini,* composed by Lochanakavi, probably belongs to this period. The major portion of this work is devoted to the discussion of a number of songs by a poet named Vidyapati, who flourished in the fifteenth century at the court of Raja Shiva Singh of Tirhut. The author also describes the current musical theories of his day and groups the *ragas* under twelve *ihats* or fundamental modes.

The development of the *bhakti* revival in North India and Bengal under Chaitanya (A.D. 1485-1533) was accompanied by a great deal of musical activity, and it was at this time that the popular musical performances, known as *Sankirtan* and *Nagarkirtan* were first started.

The Emperor Akbar (A.D. 1542-1605) was a fervent lover of music and did much for its development. During his reign *ragas* were considerably modified under foreign influence and, though some of thes modifications transgressed the established practice, they were on the whole to the advantage of music and helped to give to Northern music some of its more pleasing characteristics. *Durbari* or chamber music was introduced in the time of Akbar, and from that time developed side by side with the music of the temple and the drama.

Haridas Swami was a great Hindu saint and musician who lived at Brindaban, the centre of the Krishna cult on the banks of the Jumna, in Akbar's reign. He was considered one of the greatest musicians of his time. Tansen, the celebrated singer of Akbar's court, was one of his pupils. Many interesting stories are told of Tansen, whose name is still fragrant throughout India and "like whom there has been no singer for a thousand years".

Raja Man Singh of Gwalior was also a great patron of music and is said to have introduced the *dhrupad* style of singing. The Gwalior court has maintained its high musicial traditions to the present day.

The disciples of Tansen divided themselves into two groups, the *Rababiyars* and the *Binkars.* The former used the new instrument invented by Tansen, the *rabab;* while the latter used the *bin,* as the *vina* is called in the north. Two descendants of these are living to-day at Rampur, a small state which has been famous for many centuries for its excellent musicians. The representative of the *Binkars* is Muhammad Wazir Khan, whose paternal ancestor was Nabi Khan Binkar at the court of the Emperor Muhammad Shah; and Muhammad Ali Khan is the representative of the *Rababiyars.*

The heroic Mirabai (*c.* 1500), wife of a prince of Udaipur and famous poetess and musician, and Tulsi Das (1584), the singer and composer of Hindi *Ramayana,* are representatives of musical culture in North India.

Pundarika Vitthal was probably another musician of Akbar's reign. He lived at Burhanpur in Khandesh and may have been asked to go over to Delhi when Akbar took Khandesh in 1609. Pundarika wrote four works *Shadragachandrodaya, Ragamala, Ragamanjari,* and *Nartananirnaya;* these have recently been discovered in the State Library of Bikaner. It appears that the music of Upper India was getting into confusion, and Pundarika seems to have been asked by the Raja Burhankhan to bring things into order. Pundarika was a southern pandit, as he himself states, calling himself 'Karnatika', or belonging to the south; and so he had come to know both the northern and southern systems. He adopts the *shuddha* scale of the south and describes many northern *ragas*. In describing his ragas he seems to make use of only fourteen *shrutis* in the octave, and uses only twelve frets for his *vina*.

Rama Amatya, a southern musician, gives us the first detailed exposition of the southern system in the *Svaramela Kalanidhi,* written about the year A.D. 1550. This work contains the first collection of Indian *ragas* which are adequately described. All of them belong to the Carnatic system and have *shadaja* as their tonic. It seems that, in the south at least, *ragas* have now been worked out from a common tonic, indicating that instrumental music had greatly developed.

Following this comes the *Ragavibodha,* one of the most important works on Indian music, written in A.D. 1609 by Somanatha, a Telugu Brahman of the East coast, probably of Rajahmundry. He was evidently a practical musician as well as a scholar and poet. The book is written in masterly couplets in the Arya metre. It starts with the theory of musical sounds and goes on to describe the different *vinas* in existence and how to use them. The names and positions of the twenty-two *shrutis* are given. Somanatha belongs to the southern school and classifies the *ragas* into primary and derivative (*Janaka* and *Janya*) as is done in modern south Indian music. He also gives a number of melodies developed from the *ragas*. A translation of this work was appearing in the *Indian Music Journal* when it met with an untimely death.

Another important work of the southern school which was written about the same time is the *Chaturdandi Prakashika,* whose author was Pandit Venkatamakhi, son of

Govinda Dikshit, and pupil of Tanappacharya, who is said to carry his *guruparampara* (scholastic succession) right back to Sharngadeva himself. This work gives the basis of the present day southern system and also of its *ragas* classification. The *ragas* are arranged under seventy-two primary *ragas,* called *Melakartas,* with a large number of derivative *ragas* attached to each. This author makes use of the twelve semitones only in describing the *ragas.*

In the northern school *Sangita Darpana,* or 'the mirror of music', is a popular work written by Damodara Misra about A.D. 1625, when Jehangir was Emperor. This book has become as unintelligible as the *Sangita Ratnakara,* from which the author has freely copied most of his materials for the chapter on *svaras.* He has added a chapter on *ragas* which is copied from some unknown author. Various pictorial descriptions of the different *ragas* are given.

There were many good musicians at the court of Shah Jahan (1628-66), among them being Jagannatha, who received the title of Kaviraja; and Lal Khan who was a descendant of Tansen. We are told that on one occasion Jagannatha and another musician named Dirang Khan received from the Emperor their weight in silver, which amounted to about Rs. 4,500.

During the reign of Aurangzeb music went out of favour in the royal court. A story is told of how the court musicians, desiring to draw the Emperor's attention to their distressful condition came past his balcony carrying a gaily dressed corpse upon a bier and chanting mournful funeral songs. Upon the Emperor enquiring what the matter was, they told him that music had died from neglect and that they were taking its corpse to the burial ground. He replied at once, "Very well, make the grave deep, so that neither voice nor echo may issue from it."

The *Sangita-Parijata,* one of the most important works of the northern school, was written by Ahobala Pandit in the seventeenth century. It was translated into Persian in the year 1724. Ahobala seems to have had access to both the *Ragatarangini* and the *Ragavibodha.* The *shuddha* scale of the *Parijata* is the same as that of the *Tarangini.* Ahobala recognizes twenty-nine *shrutis* altogether in the octave, but he rarely uses more than twelve to describe his *ragas.* He gives altogether 122 different *ragas.* The *Parijata* is the first work to describe the twelve *svaras* in terms of the length of the string of the *vina,* so that we are able to reproduce to-day the notes that he used.

The next author of importance is Bhavabhatta, who was attached to the court of a raja named Anupasinha. His ancestors came from the province of Abhira in Malwa and his father was Janardanabhatta, a musician at the court of Shah Jahan. It is possible that he was the great musician of that name who obtained the title 'Kaviraja' from the Shah. The family may have belonged to a southern stock, as he shows considerable acquaintance with the southern system of music. He classifies all the *ragas* under twenty *thats* (primary *ragas*) and his *shuddha* scale is *Kanakangi,* the *shuddha* scale of the south. He seems to have attempted to arrange the northern *ragas* according to the southern system.

About this time Purandara Vitthala wrote many beautiful songs in Kanarese, which are used today by the pupil as exercises at the beginning of his musical studies.

According to Sir S. M. Tagore, Muhammad Shah (1719) was the last Emperor to have famous musicians at his court. Among them were Adaranga and Sadaranga, two great *Binkars.* During this period the singer Shori perfected the *Tappa* style of Hindusthani singing. New types of song and music were also introduced, many of which were pleasing combinations of the Hindu and Persian styles.

In the early British period Indian music was generally confined to the courts of the leading Indian princes, as most Europeans regarded it as primitive and unscientific. There were, however, scholars like Sir William Jones and Sir Ousley and amateurs like Captain Day and Captain Willard who made a considerable study of it.

In South India, the Maratha king of Tanjore, Tulajaji (A.D. 1763-1787) encouraged musicians by gifts and grants of land, so that they came to his court from the whole of India, and Tanjore became one of the most important musical centres in India. This king was also the author of an important treatise entitled *Sangita Saramritam.*

The *Nagmat-e-Asaphi,* written in A.D. 1813 by Muhammad Rezza, a nobleman of Patna, is a critical work on northern music. He pronounces the various northern systems of classification to be out of date and has no use for the *raga-ragini-putra* basis upon which they build. He gives a new system of his own which brings together into groups *ragas* which have similar features. This work is the first authority to take the *Bilaval* scale (similar to the European major mode) as its *shuddha* scale. This is the *shuddha* scale of the north to-day. The author tells us that he wrote the book after consulting the best artists available in his day. It is said that his *raga lakshanas* (definitions) are still of use for Hindusthani musicians.

About this time Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jaipur (A. D. 1779-1804) called together a conference of musical experts and artists in Jaipur in order to arrange for a standard work on Hindusthani music. The book which resulted was called *Sangita Sara* or *'Epitome of Music'.* The literary talent available does not seem to have been of a very high order, but it preserves for future reference the opinions of a body of musicians upon current thought and practice. Here also the *shuddha* scale is *Bilaval,* which by then seems to have been recognized as the regular Hindusthani *shuddha* scale.

Sangita Ragakalpadruma written by Krishnananda Vyasa and published in Calcutta in 1842 collects together all the masterpieces then available of Hindi composition.

While the northern system was thus trying to find a new basis of classification, the south was going ahead in musical composition. Tanjore was for many years one of the most important musical centres of India. It was here that Tyagayya or Tyagaraja, the great singer and poet (*c.* 1800-1850) composed and sang his songs, and gathered around himself a band of disciples who have continued his tradition till the present day. His charming *kritis* and *kirtanas* are still sung all over the south. He was a creative musical genius and his compositions mark a definite advance in South Indian musical development. One who remembers him describes him as 'a tall lean man with a brown complexion.' He was revered as a perfectly sincere and selfless man. His father was Rama Brahman, who was also a musical composer of some repute. The *rishi* Narada is said to have appeared to Tyagaraja and to have presented him with the rare musical treatise entitled *Svirarnava.* His teacher was Sunthi Venkataraman. Music and religion were woven together in his life, and his songs were the outpourings of a real devotion. They were said to have been composed on *Ekadashi* days, when he fasted all day long. Tyagaraja introduced *Sangatis*—peculiar variations upon a particular melody—into his music. Each variation, while retaining the important features of the original melody, becomes more and more elaborate. Originality was the distinguishing mark of all his compositions.

Govinda Marar was another well-known southern musician of this period. He lived in Travancore, a native state with a long and honourable musical tradition. Govinda Marar was known as Shatkala Govinda, because he could sing a piece in sextuple time.

Muttuswami Dikshita and Syama Sastri were both contemporaries of Tyagaraja. The former belonged to the Tinnevelly District and invented a new system of Indian notation which makes use of the different vowel syllables to indicate the various *vikritis* of each *svara.* Ettiyapuram Subrama Dikshita, his grandson, has also written in Telugu a very important work on the southern system, which endeavours to apply the principles of Sharngadeva to modern music.

Many of the rajahs and princes of Cochin and Travancore were good musicians, among whom the most brilliant was Perumal Maharaja, whose compositions are in six languages: Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindusthani, Marathi.

In Bengal, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Sir S. M. Tagore produced a number of important works on music. His *Universal History of Music* is a work of considerable value. The Bengal pandits, including Tagore, adopted the old Hindusthani *raga-ragini-putra* classification for their *ragas.*

II

INDIAN DANCE: THE BACKGROUND

THE background of the dance in India is not merely what a historian can describe, for it is more than the history of man or of a nation. It is the history of the soul of India and, therefore, an expression both of the Manifest and the Unmanifest. It is the spirit of both Eternity and Time. It is the spirit of man and woman. It is *purusha* and *prakriti,* an expression of the evolution of movement, a truly creative force that has come down to us from the ages. This embodiment of sound and rhythm which creates a poetry of spiritual expression is called dance or *nritya.* We cannot divorce it from religion and philosophy, for in India, religion and philosophy are not just intellectual conceptions or mere set of rules and regulations. Religion, philosophy and art all pertain to that One Spirit which is indivisible and obtainable to the sage and the saint as well as to the meanest human being. In each dwells the Divine Spirit; in each rules the Creator; in each there is an eternal longing to attain true happiness or *moksha.*

It is to satisfy and at the same time enable all to attain this happiness that the *Vedas,* the *Upanishads,* as well as dance and music exist. It is possible, therefore, for every mortal as well as divine being to dance, each according to the measure of his understanding but each sharing in the Divine Bliss or *ananda.* In India the dance does not evolve through man and his experimentation. It evolves from Divinity.

Dance is Yoga: The first glimpses of the dance are given to us by Shiva Himself, the Yogi of yogis. He shows us the cosmic dance and portrays to us the unity of Being. He demonstrates that the highest yoga is in the complete oneness of soul and body, and that this oneness can be attained through dance. This is why dance is called yoga, for it consists not merely of physical acrobatics but is a means of achieving unity in consciousness.

The Supreme Life dances. From it radiates the essence of all sound, holding within itself the potency of all possible articulation. To the accompaniment of the thunder of this music, He dances. The cosmic rhythm of His dance draws around Him ensouled matter which is differentiated into the infinite variety of this beautiful universe. Sri Krishna, the *paramatma,* dances in Brindaban and the *gopis* dance around Him in the *Rasa.* In the rhythm of the dance, the *paramatma* draws to Himself the *jivas* that have separated from Him. In the rhythm of the dance each *gopi* discovers Sri Krishna for herself. The *jiva* knows again the Supreme Fount of Life from which it originated. This is the origin of dance and it naturally came to us through Bharata, a great sage. No one but a *rishi* could possibly have brought the dance of Shiva or Nataraja into this world for human beings to comprehend and perform.

Importance of Art in Worship: It is against this background that dance traditions in India developed. We should remember that the unity of all true art has been stressed in India from the very beginning. Thus we find that the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata, the earliest surviving work on aesthetics deals not only with *natya* as such but also with music, poetry, drama, theatre, architecture, and a consistent theory of aesthetics. What was creative in man, that he offered in worship to the One Creator of all.

Thus, in all Hindu worship, the arts find an important place.

The temple is the home of architecture and sculpture. It was here that the great poets presented their works to the public for the first time. Great philosophical discussions, which represent some of the greatest flights of the human spirit, took place in its precincts. To it were attached musicians and dancers so that at the appointed hours of worship, music and dance could form not only appurtenances of worship but become integral parts of the ritual as well. Nurtured as it was in the temple, the dance became the vehicle for certain ideas and developed a refined and subtle idiom in order to fulfil its purpose.

Traditional History: The traditional history of the dance in India is well known. Bharata, the father of Indian dance and dramatics, once produced a play for the delectation of the *devas.* It was later performed before Shiva and Parvati. The former, pleased with Bharata's skill, asked one of his *ganas*, Tandu, a skilled dancer, to instruct the sage in the principles of His own cosmic dance. Originally taught by Tandu, the dance was called *tandava.* At the same time Parvati taught her own dance to Usha, the daughter of Bana and the wife of Aniruddha, grandson of Sri Krishna. This came to be called *lasya* and is used to connote a feminine type of dance. Usha, in her turn, taught it to the ladies of Dwarka in Saurashtra from where it spread to various parts of India.

Treatises on *Nritya*: Whether Saurashtra was actually the birth-place of the dance in India is open to question. There are many references to dancing in the *Rig Veda* from which we may infer an origin earlier than the Puranic age. There are more elaborate references in the *itihasas.* A study of all these would reveal that while there were professional dancers, the art was one that people learnt and practised in general. Arjuna as Brihannala was employed by Virata to teach music and dance in his palace.

In the Vedic age, perhaps, the dance had not evolved into a specialised art but was a social or communal activity. However, judging from the appointment of Brihannala as teacher, dance and music had already acquired a refined technique during the time of the *itihasas.*

The earliest treatises on the dance are not available to us. The great grammarian Panini, who wrote not later than the 4th century B.C., mentions the *sutras* of Silalin and Krishasvin while dealing with the root *nrit,* "to dance". They were presumably authorities on the subject at that time.

The earliest known detailed commentary is the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata (*c.* 1st century A.D.). In Tamil works, such as the *Silappadikaram,* which were written about the same time, there are elaborate descriptions of the dance. These dances seem to follow the rules laid down by Bharata, and it would appear that one unified school of dance held sway all over India.

Since then many books have been written on this art, of which the most important now available are *Abhinaya Darpana* of Nandikesvara, of *Dasarupaka* of Dhananjaya, *Sangita Ratnakara* of Sarnga-deva, *Sangita Saramrita* of Tulajaji, Maharaja of Tanjore, and *Balarama Bharata* of Balarama Varma, Maharaja of Travancore. There are also very valuable works on the subject in other Indian languages.

Influence of Folk Art: As has been said earlier, there must have been at one time one system of classical dance all over India. In the course of time, however, each cultural area in the country seems to have developed a local idiom of its own. This can be attributed to many causes.

Movements from folk-dances peculiar to these areas may have been assimilated into the classical form. Foreign influences, encouraged by trade or invasion, may have been at work. Due to various reasons, one area may have been cut off from another and this could have resulted in the development of new characteristics in seclusion.

The four main schools of the dance in India, namely, Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Manipuri and Kathak, must have originated and developed in one of these ways. Both foreign and local influences are clearly evident in the Manipuri form of dance. In Kathak, there is a predominant foreign impact. In the case of Kathakali, the rules of Bharata seem to have been super-imposed on an ancient local art. This is clear from the glaring departures that Kathakali makes from the *Natya Shastra,* especially in the realm of *auchitya.* The Kathakali stage represents many things which, according to Bharata, are unfit for dramatic representation. In spite of these local variations and colloquialisms there is no doubt that, on the whole, all classical Indian dance forms have originated from one central body of tradition.

Whether it is poetry, drama, dance or music, all Indian arts have evolved, in the course of practice, certain concepts and laws which are common to all of them. Of all these, the concept of *rasa* holds the central place. The object of all arts is the evoking of *rasa.*

Aesthetics: "Artistic beauty cannot exist unless the heart of the man of good taste is moved to delight by the fascination of its expression", says the *Alamkara Raghava,* a work on Indian rhetoric. This enkindling of emotion which results in an impersonal delight, whatever the nature of the emotion expressed, is *rasa.* It is totally different from an emotion that is the outcome of a mere experience of the senses. In the latter case, the feeling is limited to the individual concerned. In a dance, the emotion portrayed is impersonal and is shared. It has undergone a transmutation so that what a member of the audience feels even when viewing a sorrowful scene is not something unpleasant but is really a delight, an *ananda* that is aesthetically conveyed through the dancer's superb portrayal. Thus, the dancer's art makes us feel in turn all the emotions but in each case the final effect that is left on us is not that of the passion depicted but is an impersonal absorption in the aesthetic mood and an *ananda,* which is the innate nature of the *atman;* shining resplendent and breaking down all the fetters of everyday circumstance.

Nine *Rasas*: This, briefly, is the theory of *rasa.* The *rasas* are now generally accepted to be nine, namely, *sringara* or love, *hasya* or humorous, *karuna* or pathetic, *vira* or heroic, *raudra* or furious, *bhayanaka* or terrifying, *vibhatsa* or disgusting, *adbhuta* or wonderful, *santa* or peaceful. In the days of Bharata and Kalidasa, *santa* was not accepted as a *rasa* for the very valid reason that it was a condition in which all passion is still.

The sentiment that gives the greatest scope to the dancer with all its variations and gradations, its refinements and subtleties, is *sringara* or love. According to Bhoja, one of the great authorities on Indian rhetoric, *sringara* is the pre-eminent *rasa* and all the others arise from it as modifications. *Bhakti* or devotion which forms the basic subject-matter of most Indian dances is transcendent love. The greatest gift of the dancer is *bhava* or the portrayal of emotion, for without *bhava* it is not possible to evoke *rasa* in a cultured audience.

There are several ways of attaining this goal. One of the most important is through *auchitya* or the propriety of the subject-matter and representation. It has been accepted by ancient authorities that art is responsible to society. Just as art is the flowering of the genius of a people through a particular way of life, it is also the instrument which works towards the constant refinement and progress of a community. It is the life of the community that forms the subject-mater of the dance. But all situations in life are not appropriate for representation on the stage.

Function of Art: The function of art is to elevate the spirit, not to degrade it. Bharata also draws a difference between *loka dharmi* and *natya dharmi,* between that which is accepted as being normal to life as it is lived and is therefore portrayed realistically, and that which the arts of dance and drama select, fix and refine out of these situations for an idealised or even stylised presentation on the stage. Indian art has always favoured idealism on the stage as against realism. This conception of *loka dharmi* and *natya dharmi* is essential to an understanding of Indian dance and *auchitya* or a correct choice of the subject-matter is of the utmost importance.

From the social point of view, we can judge the importance of *auchitya* when we consider the patently injurious effects of bad films, music, dancing or any other bad art on the collective consciousness of the people, especially the young. Through the neglect of the concept of what is proper for representation Bharata Natyam in South India almost became extinct. There was a revolt against the art and many people began to refuse to go to Bharata Natyam recitals. This state of things is now happily changed.

Concept of *Dhvani*: The concept of *dhvani* also plays a great part in the true presentation of the dance. *Dhvani* means echo and implies the suggested sense that underlies a portrayal. A gesture, a turn of expression, should be able to call up implied suggestions just as a sound might evoke a series of echoes. In a good dance performance, this sense of suggestion is all important. When Sri Rama lifts up Shiva's bow in order to bend it—the size, the weight, the unyielding nature of the bow, the strength needed to bend it, and Sri Rama's extreme youth—all these have to be suggested by the dancer who does not have in his hand anything in the nature of a bow. A dancer representing Ravana lifts up the mighty Kailasa and through a multitude of suggestions makes us see the magnitude of the mountain, and how it towers into the skies. In the tender *padams* of Kshetragna, with all their delicate echoes, the dancer must convey the entire range of subtle emotions that agitate the mind of the maiden as she waits for Sri Krishna. This vast field of suggestion enriches the art and no dancer is truly great unless she or he has the capacity to create a world of *dhvani.*

Essentially Spiritual: From all this background comes the history of the dance which has spread not only all over India, but even to other countries like Burma, Cambodia and Java. It has kept its spiritual quality in all its forms, whether it be in the temple dramas called Bhagavata Mela of Tanjore District; or in the Kuchipudi dance which comes from a village composed entirely of Bhagavatar Brahmins who made this art famous; or in what is known today as Bharata Natyam or Sadir as perfomed by *devadasis* (servants of God); or in any other form. Except Kathak, almost all of these have remained temple dances. The technique of each, though different, is yet according to the *shastras.*

The question is asked whether the traditional dance can be used to express modern life. Of course it can be used for the portrayal of modern ideas, but as its form is a natural unfolding of the spirit and a spiritual conception of life, it would loose its meaning and could no more be called Bharata's dance if it were used for another purpose. In the *Malavikagnimitra,* Kalidasa speaks of the dance as follows:

देवानामिदमामनन्ति मुनयः कान्तं क्रतुं चाक्षुषं

"The *rishis* consider this dance as a charming sacrifice to the gods, pleasant to behold." What was proclaimed by the *rishis* as a sacrifice, charming and pleasing to the eyes of the gods must continue to be a sacrifice or offering to the gods.

It does not, therefore, mean that any further development is impossible. How can anyone who has studied the growth of the dance through centuries think so, for it was only a hundred years ago or so that the art developed and grew under the fostering care of great geniuses. But they did not bypass its spirit nor did they overlook the fact that the dance is a way of salvation through art; that its purifying influence on human nature will ultimately lead to the realisation of the oneness of life. However varied, however divergent the expression, all roads lead finally to the feet of the Supreme Being. From this inspiration alone was the great tradition built up. Great poets, kings, musical composers and scholars interested themselves in the dance. The dance and a dancer form the theme of one of Kalidasa's plays. A dancer is the heroine of the great Tamil classic *Silappadikaram;* the most beautiful lyric in Sanskrit, *Gita-Govinda,* was composed by Jayadeva for the dance; so were the *padams* of Kshetragna in Telugu. Kings like Tulajaji of Tanjore and Balarama Varma of Travancore wrote treatises on the dance, great sages like Bharata gave the art its soul and being. If modern India felt this way and lived in accordance with this principle, the dance would automatically become an expression of modern life and yet remain eternal.

III

INDIAN DANCE: THEORY & PRACTICE

"The Supreme intelligence dances in the soul for the purpose of removing our sins. By these means, our Father scatters the darkness of illusion (*maya*), *burns the thread of causality* (*karma*), *stamps down evil* (*avidya*), *showers Grace, and lovingly plunges the Soul in the Ocean of Bliss* (*ananda*). *They never see rebirths, who behold this mystic dance."*

DANCING in India is an ancient art. In Mohenjo-daro and Harappa dancing was perhaps a religious ritual, but most probably it also had a secular side. A small bronze figure of a nude dancing girl discovered at Mohenjo-daro has been described as "a perfect piece of casting."

In the *Jaiminiya Brahmana* (II, 42-44) there is a passage with a description of "dancing and singing, the sound of lutes, crowds of Apsarases, fragrance, a great noise." But for the mention of Apsarases, the scene would remind one of a present day music hall.

In the *Jatakas* also there are many episodes connected with dancing. We learn of king Kalabu, who, inflamed with strong drink, went to the park with a troupe of dancing girls. There the girls with their dances and music lulled him to sleep. Then we hear of a male dancer named Patala who lived near Banaras, and who was also a hard drinker. Buffoons danced to bring smile to the lips of a morose prince, and once when the Bodhisattva was born in an acrobat's family he learned the Javelin dance, and with his master used to travel about exhibiting his skill.

Under the Mauryas, it seems, the dancers, at least in the capital, were placed under the rigorous control of the ubiquitous bureaucracy. Kautilya, the stern realist, made no distinction between a dancer and a prostitute, and stated: "The same rules shall apply to an actor, dancer, singer, player on musical instrument, a buffoon, a mimic player, a rope-dancer, a juggler, a bard, pimps and unchaste women." Kautilya also prescribed that, "those who teach prostitutes, female slaves and actresses, such arts as singing, playing on musical instrument, reading, dancing, acting, writing, painting, playing on musical instruments like *Vina*, pipe, and drum, reading the thoughts of others, manufacturing of scents and garlands, shampooing and the art of attracting and captivating the minds of others shall be endowed with maintenance from the state." The teachers also were to train the sons of the ladies mentioned above, for a career on the stage. Kautilya (*Adhyakshaprachara,* 44) placed all of them under a "Ganikadhyaksha", which can only be translated as "Superintendent of courtesans."

From what one can learn from Kautilya, it would appear that dancing at that period was an organised profession under state-control. Though developed technique is indicated, the picture, like much else in the *Arthasastra,* is slightly sordid. But Kautilya's estimate of a dancing girl's morals is unfortunately reflected in the great Tamil epic *Silappadikaram.*

Madhavi, the famous danseuse of the *Silappadikaram* had begun training when she was five, and after seven strenuous years of rigorous practice displayed her talents before the king, who had thoroughly mastered the technique of dancing. Madhavi danced two types of dances and "in her quick movement she looked like a golden creeper animated with life." The king in recognition of her talent presented her with a green leaf-garland and 1008 gold coins. But the "fawn eyed Madhavi" handed over the garland to a maidservant, with instructions to "stand in the street where the rich citizens of the city passed" and to announce that he who would buy the garland for 1008 gold coins would become "the husband of our creeper-like lady." The garland was purchased by Kovalan. "He entered Madhavi's bridal chamber, and as he embraced her he was captivated so much by her charms that he forgot himself and did not like to part from her. In sooth, he forgot his own unsullied home and wife." (*Silappadikaram*, Dikshitar's translation, p. 104)

But courtesans were not the only dancers. Vatsyayana includes dancing in enumerating sixty-four arts and states that "a king's daughter or the daughter of a noble man, well skilled in these arts, will have her husband under her sway even if he has one thousand wives." (*Kamasutra*, II. 22) This dictum is to some extent borne out by the drama *Malavikagnimitra* of Kalidasa, where Malavika captivates the king by her superb dancing, and let it be added, by her beauty as well. In order to vindicate the prestige of her teacher, Malavika had to appear in a dance contest before the king and the queens. Her teacher was instructed to have her dressed more or less transparently.

Thus did Malavika appear before the king and after singing a love lyric of four lines, expressed the idea of the song through her dance. Madhavi also had introduced her dance "with four parts of the auspicious song" probably some religious song. But Malavika's song was amorous, which shows that though it may have been customary for the dance to illustrate the *rasa* of a song, it was not necessarily devotional.

As a matter of fact Bana presents us with a strikingly vivid scene while describing the festivities after the birth of the future Emperor Harshavardhana. "Whispering softly like cuckoos, in low passionate tones, they (dancing girls) sang the words of vulgar mimes, ambrosia to their lover's ears.... With upraised creeper-like arms, vocal with rows of bracelets, they seemed to embrace the very sun.... They lashed the young folk with great wreaths of flowers.... Like waves of passion's flood, they gleamed all resonant with the cries of anklets adding music to their steps. As to what was proper to be said or not, they were as void of discrimination as the childish play of happiness....They were surrounded by throngs of princes." (*Harshacharita,* trans. by Cowell and Thomas, pp. 113-14)

This seems to be an early type of the much despised "nautch". Whatever it lacked in artistic quality, was probably compensated by its popularity. It is usually assumed that dancing in India has a mystic divine origin, and was exclusively practised with a deep religious attitude. Unfortunately human feelings being what they are, the precepts of the holy sages were often forgotten. Merutunga, in his *Prabandhachintamani* (S. J. Series, p. 114) describes that one day in the presence of King Paramardin a low dancing girl was made to dance with nothing but a short petticoat on. Masudi describes as not infrequent, music parties, where the girls were made to drink "in order to excite them to show their mirth so that the beholders may be inspired with gaiety by their merriment."

We may here note the observations of Al-Beruni on the condition of the Devadasis in the eleventh century, when it seems prostitution in India had become notorious. Al-Beruni writes: "People think with regard to harlotry that it is allowed with them (Indians).... The fault, however, in this lies with the kings, not with the nation. But for this, no Brahman or priest would suffer in their idol temples the women who sing, dance and play. The kings make them an attraction for their cities, a bait of pleasures for their subjects, for no other but financial reasons.'' (Sachau, II, p. 157) This probably was true for the capital. For the Devadasis in the village-temples, at least in the Vijayanagara Empire, provision was made by the people themselves. There are inscriptions showing that Brahmans and artisans had joined together and had imposed some regular taxes and irregular ones (e.g. on marriages) and granted some lands to provide for the Devadasis. A grant exclusively made by the Brahmans in A.D. 1372 concludes thus: ''Whatever Brahmans oppose this, are out of the Brahman community and banished from the village.''

It should not be concluded that the art of dancing was practised exclusively by the courtesans. We have already seen the example of Malavika, and Bana after describing the dance of the ''nautch'' girls gives a description of the dance by the queens,—Harsha's step-mothers. Here the royal guards with their canes prevented the crowd from stampeding into the dancing enclosure. There is also the example of Santaladevi, the ''senior queen'' and ''crowned queen consort'' (*patta mahadevi*) of the Hoysala Vishnuvardhana, who is described in a Hoysala record as ''perfect in song, music and dancing.'' This accomplished lady bore the peculiar sobriquet of *savati-gandhahasti* and *udvritta-savati-gandhavarane,* which means, ''a rutting elephant towards ill-mannered co-wives,'' and this was perpetuated by the Jain temple named Savati-gandhavarana-Jinalaya and Savati-gandahasti-basadi which she built at Sravana-Belgola. She had co-wives.

The queens of Vijayanagara also were interested in dancing. Paes, the Portugese chronicler, in describing the palace states that he was taken into a building and adds: "This hall is where the king sends his women to be taught to dance." But more interesting is his description of the sculptured panels inside the dancing hall: "The designs of these panels show the positions at the ends of dances in such a way that on each panel there is a dancer in the proper position at the end of a dance; this is to teach the women, so that if they forget the position in which they have to remain when dance is done, they may look at one of the panels.... By that they keep in mind what they have to do."

II

Dancing in India was always closely related to the drama. The ancient Indian play depended for its effects not only on words, but on songs and dances. The root *nat*, from which the words *nata* (actor), *nati* (actress), *natika* etc., are derived, means "to dance", as well as "to act". The word *abhinaya* at one time signified dancing also. For, the word *abhinaya* is made up of the prefix *abhi* (towards) and the root *ni* (to carry) so that the words means "representing (carrying) a play (towards) the spectators", and a famous commentator defines *abhinaya* as movements for suggesting *rasa* (sentiment) and *bhava* (mood). Hence all the texts dealing with dancing usually are manuals for acting as well. It is impossible to translate the word *rasa;* Sylvain Levi, writing on Indian theatre remarked: "Indian genius produced a new art, the symbol and summary of which is the word *rasa* and which can be condensed in one brief formula: the poet does not express, he suggests."

Dancing is the creation of *rasa* through particular suggestions and elaborate manuals came to be written giving directions as to how the appropriate suggestions could be best effected through suitable movements of the different parts of the body. Of such manuals, the most important are the *Natyashastra* and *Abhinayadarpana.*

The authorship of *Natyashastra* is usualy ascribed to the sage Bharata, but the claim is not unchallenged. "In the *Natyashastra* itself his mythical character is very obvious, and the majority of the Puranas are silent about the so-called author of the *Natyashastra* and there is not a single legend about him in any of the extant Puranas or the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata.* The word *Bharata* which originally meant "an actor" seems to have given rise to an eponymous author of the *Bharatashastra* or *Natashastra,* (the manual for actors)." There are, however, reasons to believe that the original work was composed about the third century A.D., though thereafter it may have undergone some changes, and is now available in two recensions. About the *Abhinayadarpana,* though we know the name of its author Nandikeshvara, it is difficult to assign it to a particular period with any degree of certainty. It is usualy taken to have been written a few centuries after *Natyashastra.*

Both *Natyashastra* and the *Abhinayadarpana* claim divine origin for the art of dancing, but the two myths differ. Another myth of this nature will be found in the *Silappadikaram.* It is clear therefore that when these books were written, the authors in order to impress their readers tried to invest their art and profession with a divine origin, but no legend had as yet gained universal approval. However, *Natyashastra's* claim that it was the fifth Veda had a peculiar charm, and as the work was much more comprehensive than any on the same subject, it gained popularity and authority. The ancient Indians had a tendency to codify all knowledge and there can be no doubt that both the books were the results of codification of existing practices. In course of time sanctity was attached to them, particularly as temples were centres of dancing but apart from their intrinsic merit, their chief claim to recognition to-day would be antiquity. It is quite possible that such a written code or manual was necessary, for already the technique had become too complicated for an average person to master it, and also no audience could follow the dance without the help of manuals. These codes were utilitarian in their concept, and empirical in form.

It appears from a Jataka story that *hasta-mudra* was at that time understood by the common people and used by them, "as a deaf and dumb language." The *mudras* are also conventional in Hindu iconography, and it is sometimes admited that the Tantrik *mudras* have some resemblance to the manual gestures used in *abhinaya.* It is now impossible to say who is the borrower, for, in ancient India fine arts were interdependent, and in the *Vishnudharmottara,* (ii, v. 4) it has been said that the canons of painting are difficult to be understood without an acquaintance with the canons of dancing. All that can be said now is that an educated person in ancient India was thoroughly conversant with the technique of dancing.

It should be always remembered that in ancient India, there was neither an amateur performer nor an ignorant audience. The dancers had to learn the technique of the art thoroughly before they were allowed to appear on the stage. Even the "nautch" girls were thoroughly proficient in their branch of the art.

Both the *Natyashastra* and the *Abhinayadarpana* define the qualifications of an ideal spectator. Here is

Bharata's definition: "Those who are possessed of (good) character, high birth, quiet behaviour and learning, are desirous of fame and virtue, impartial, advanced in age, proficient in drama in all its limbs, alert, honest, unaffected by passion, expert in playing the four kinds of musical instruments, acquainted with the costumes and make-up, the rules of dialects, the four kinds of histrionic representation, grammar, prosody, and various (other) *Shastras*, are very virtuous, experts in different arts and crafts, and have fine sense of the sentiments and the states, should be made spectators in witnessing a drama." It is however ruefully stated that, "all these various qualities are not known to exist in one single spectator," hence inferior or even common men are to be admitted in the assembly of experts, but naturally the former cannot appreciate the performance of a superior type. (*Natyashastra,* XVII, 49-52, 55-56)

Dances were usualy performed on festive occasions, such as coronations, celebrations, procession of gods and men, marriages, reunion of friends, entry into towns or houses, the birth of children and other auspicious occasions. There were also regular stages attached to a temple, and as late as the 16th century we find Ramananda, a great disciple of Sri Chaitanya, training Devadasis apparently for a forthcoming show. But the existence of regular auditoriums in the ancient period is proved by the Sitabenga cave in Ramgarh hill. It seems to be a natural cavern with an artificial chamber hollowed out at its back, while at the entrance, under the arch of rock, are several tiers of seats or steps, semi-circular in plan and facing outwards. These seats seem to form the auditorium of a small theatre, the orchestra being on the sloping plateau in front of the cave. The smaller Jogimara cave nearby may have been intended as the resting place for the actresses employed in the adjoining theatre. One of the actresses named Sutanuka was made immortal by the plaintive avowal of her lover Devadatta inscribed in the Jogimara cave: "I Devadatta, the *rupadaksha* from Banaras, loved the Devadasi Sutanuka."

The word *rupadaksha* has been rendered variously as, copyist, sculptor or actor, and even as banker, but it seems to us that in the present context it may mean a good actor or judge of drama. For, another peculiarity of drama or dance in the ancient days was its procedure. The texts recommended that there should be a president and umpires. Their requisite qualifications are set out in detail and one of their duties was to award a banner to the best performer.

III

At present the most important schools of dance in India are the Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. There are also the Garba of Gujarat, Chow of Seraikela, Santhal dances of the Santhals, and other folk-dances peculiar to almost every province.

Bharata Natyam: Tamil Nad is now the home of Bharata Natyam, which among all the Indian dances, as now practised, follows most closely the *Natyashastra.* Bowers declares that Bharata Natyam "while being India's most brilliant dance, is also the most classic." All the four elements of classical dance, namely *angika* (gestures), *vachika* (words), *sattvika* (representation of feeling) and *aharya* (costumes) are used effectively in the Bharata Natyam.

Bharata Natyam has been preserved through oral or rote tradition and taught by the Nattuvanars, or masters. The most famous Nattuvanars of modern age were the brothers Ponniah and Vadivelu Pillai of Tanjore and they flourished more than a century ago. Unlike the usual Nattuvanars, the Pillai brothers were Sanskrit scholars, and were therefore able to reshape the dance and standardize its form with the help of the *Shastras.* They fixed the repertoire and regulated the dance items to about a three-to-four-hour long programme. The descendants and disciples of Pillai brothers have continued the tradition to this day, but the most famous exponent of Bharata Natyam of our days has been Minakshi Sundaram Pillai.

It was held for a long time that Bharata Natyam was originally meant for women only, and was therefore practised exclusively by them. Ramgopal was the first male dancer to perform Bharata Natyam, and now both males and females follow this school.

Kathakali: Kathakali is the pantomimic dance-drama of Kerala, the soft little region of the extreme south with its exuberantly verdant fields, tall cocoanut trees and tangled lianas. It has been claimed that ''the origin of Kathakali may be traced to the ritualistic period of the Vedic age'', but for all practical purposes it may be said to have been introduced by the Raja of Kottarakkara (A.D. 1575-1650).

A Zamorin of Calicut, it is said, once organised a type of performance called Krishnanattam which still survives. One of his neighbouring princes once asked the Zamorin for the loan of his troupe but the latter refused alleging that nobody in the other's kingdom was capable of understanding the Krishnanattam. The retaliation of the insulted prince was indeed royal: he organised a rival dancing troupe and innovated a type of dancing known as Ramanattam, which was later transformed into Kathakali. The Raja of Kottarakkara gave a new interpretation to Ramanattam and considerably modified it.

The original Ramanattam described the entire story from the birth of Rama to the capture of Lanka. The

Raja composed eight incidents from Rama's life and based the acting on the *Natyashastra*. Thus Kathakali retained the vigour of a folk-dance and gained the grace of a classical art.

"Kathakali's atmosphere in its natural setting in village clearings, with its grotesque accoutrements so unreal in the light of present-day life, with its synthetic fusion of dance song and drama, engenders in the spectator a sense of sheer primeval power. Its elemental impact seems to relate to the dawn of man himself. . . ." "The deafening beating of the drums and the shouting of the singers are matched by the acrobatics and virility of the actors. With their weirdly painted faces, they recreate a world of demons, of gods, of brave men and cowards, of monkeys who save men, of women who are chaste and true. The stories, with their epoch-making, cosmos shattering antics, depict events so remote from daily life, not only of the village but also of the sophisticated city dweller who comes out of curiosity to witness the performances, that mankind seems infinitesimal.

The main sentiment displayed in the Kathakali is heroism (*vira-rasa*), with its emphasis on the terrific (*bhayanaka*). Hence women play no part in it, their roles being acted by men, who either wear elaborate masks or appear heavily painted.

Both Bharata Natyam and Kathakali accept the *Natyashastra* as their authority, but while the former is essentially a dance—usually solo—Kathakali is a dance-drama, a ballet in the sense that several characters appear on the stage at the same time and that one person appears in one role and retains it throughout the entire evening. It may also be held generally that Bharata Natyam depicts the *lasya* dance while Kathakali portrays or exhibits *tandava*. Hence the former is a dance for women and the latter a dance for men. But just as men are taking up Bharata Natyam, female Kathakali dancers are also known.

Kathakali owes its modern revival to Mahakavi Vallathol, the renowned poet of Malabar. He started the Kerala Kala Mandalam, successfully presented Kathakali to a modern audience and gained great appreciation from critics of India and Europe. The most famous Kathakali dancer of recent times has been Gopinath, the palace-dancer of Travancore, whom Tagore once described as a "real artist". Gopinath has also started a dancing academy called Shri Chitrodaya Nartakalayam.

Kathak: The Kathak school of dancing has mixed *tandava* and the *lasya* and depends for its effect on a peculiar technique which a competent critic calls "foot gymnastics". But Maud Allen the famous dancer saw a "nautch" and said: "I thought I could dance, but compared to your girls, I know nothing".

The Kathak dancers pay great attention to foot work strictly following the rhythmic accompaniment of *tabla*, whose reverberations are reproduced by the jingling of bells attached to the anklets worn by the dancer. Modern critics assign an inferior position to Kathak, because of its over-emphasis on technique and absence of emotional expression. Bannerji goes to the extent of declaring it as "void of all aesthetic sense and flavour." But as Arnold Haskell once said, "The difference between dancing and acrobatics lies not so much in techniques as in a state of mind." It is an undoubted fact that modern classical dance in India is becoming increasingly academic, demanding from the spectators almost all the qualifications prescribed in the *Natyashastra*. Kathak provides a welcome relief.

Kalka and Binda of Lucknow improved the Kathak, particularly its technique. Their descendants Achchhan

Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj are now regarded as the greatest exponents of this art.

Manipuri: The dance of Manipur influenced Rabindranath Tagore in 1917 and led to the revival of modern Bengali dancing. But Rabindranath's version of the dance differed greatly from the real Manipuri, for he conceived the dances as a vehicle of expression for his songs. Without understanding his songs, for which a nodding acquaintance with Bengali is not enough, it is impossible to understand his dances. The real Manipuri dance, however, depends exclusively on the Radha-Krishna songs of mediæval Bengal made popular by Sri Chaitanya, for the Manipuris belong to his sect which was once declared to be the state religion. Therefore the Manipuris dance in a circle or in a semi-circle, in imitation of Krishna's Rasa dance known in Manipur as Ras.

The Ras dance may continue twelve hours accompanied by songs from *Gita-Govinda* or other Vaishnava lyrics. The Ras-lila is really a full scale opera combining elements of dance and chorus. It is a dance of lavish colour and ecstatic beauty with extremely decorative and expensive costumes. The glittering jewels, the flashing mirrors and scintillating mica sewn on the costumes inexorably attract the attention of the spectators from the very beginning.

The other famous dance of Manipur is the Lai Haroba, which consecrates fertility. It is older than Ras and has a deep significance for that charming little country and her graceful people.

IV

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

(i) SANCHI

THE Sanchi sculptures are supposed to cover a period beginning with Ashoka's reign, down to about 140 B.C. It would require a whole volume to do them justice, but, except as an important link in the evolution of the Indian ideal, they do not belong to the scope of this work. They provide, however, a most wonderful picture of Indian life and thought. The visits of the pilgrims to the sacred shrines, the stories told by the camp-fires, the fabled pre-existences of Buddha in the form of bird and beast, and all the mysteries of the untrodden primeval forests, are revealed in a series of sculptures which, besides being most valuable for historical purposes, makes a most delightful, original Indian jungle-book. We can see, also, how strongly the idea of the essential unity of creation had taken hold of the Indian mind. For all Nature is shown animated by a single purpose; man and beast, gods and demi-gods, and the weird monsters of Indian mythology thronging together to join in worship of the emblems of the Buddhist faith.

The Sanchi sculptors are, like those of Bharhut, entirely naturalistic in the treatment of the human form. As Fergusson says: "All the men and women represented are human beings, acting as men and women have acted in all times, and the success or failure of the representations may consequently be judged by the same rules as are applicable to the sculptures of any other place or country. Notwithstanding this, the mode of treatment is so original and local that it is difficult to assign it to any exact position in comparison with the arts of the Western world."

The person of Buddha as a divine being receiving adoration is still unrepresented, though he appears as Prince Siddhartha and as an ascetic. There are some figures of primitive Indian divinities, such as Shri, the goddess of fortune, but they do not seem to suggest any connection with the Dhyana or Yoga doctrine, or to represent an idealised type of body. The Indian artistic ideal, if it had been evolved at all, had not yet been introduced into Buddhism.

For European artists the greatest interest of the Sanchi sculptures, apart from their decorative beauty, will probably be in their wonderfully truthful and skilful rendering of animal life. This is especially remarkable in the East Gateway, one of the latest of the Sanchi sculptures.

Yet some of the single detached figures are extremely good, and show a great advance upon the art of Bharhut, though the style is similar. On the east gate is a female figure, singluarly beautiful in movement and strongly modelled, which forms a bracket on the right-hand side of the same gateway. The style of it shows no trace of the Hellenic tradition, nor of the idealism which developed in later Indian sculpture. It is a piece of simple, forceful realism by Indian sculptors, before any attempt was made by them to idealise the human form. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to find among the Gandharan sculptures anything to surpass it, either in technique or in artistic feeling.

Though the wooden forms of construction are retained, the later sculptures of Sanchi, of which these are examples, show a perfect familiarity with the technique of stone-carving and great freedom in execution. The best figure-sculpture found here, taken in conjunction with that of Bharhut, make it abundantly clear that before the Sanchi gateways were finished, or long before any of the Gandharan sculptures were executed, India had developed an original school of sculpture, and was no longer dependent upon foreign aid, as it was, to some extent, in the time of Ashoka. Indian art continued to assimilate foreign elements, as every living art will. The Gandharan sculptors, no doubt, occasionally found employment in India, but they did not come there as teachers, for India had nothing to learn from them in technique, and she deliberately chose ideals different from those of Greece.

(ii) AMARAVATI

THE next important series of sculptures representing early Indian life and history are those of Amaravati, a Buddhist settlement on the banks of the Krishna river in Madras, probably a half-way house for those adventurous emigrants from India's northwestern seaports who afterwards colonised Java and Cambodia. They are attributed to the last half of the second century A.D., so there is an interval of something like three centuries between them and the later Sanchi sculptures. It is quite evident that there must have been a great deal of Indian sculpture produced in the interval, but very little of it remains, no doubt for the same reason that nothing has been found before the time of Ashoka, mainly because most of it was executed in wood.

Ashoka's immediate successors did not continue his great propaganda of Buddhism, so Indian architects and sculptors naturally reverted to the use of the material with which they were most familiar. In the meantime, however, on the north-west frontier of India, the Indo-Roman school of Gandhara arose. Gandhara was a country in which suitable stone for building and sculpture was more plentiful than wood; so while all the wooden, or semi-wooden buildings constructed in India in this period have totally disappeared, the stone monasteries and the *stupas* of Gandhara have left a great deal of their rich sculptures to posterity. This, and the fact that Gandhara was closer to the outskirts of the Roman Empire, and therefore more susceptible to Graeco-Roman influences than India, have given the Gandhara school a rather fictitious importance in the history of Indian art. To understand this early period of Indian art rightly we must always bear in mind that for every monument in stone which now exists there were in India perhaps a thousand in less permanent materials, which have completely disappeared.

The Amaravati sculptures show Buddha for the first time in Indian art as a divine being receiving worship, and as the type of Buddha closely resembles that of Gandhara, Professor Grünwedel and other archaeologists infer that the Graeco-Roman artists of the Gandharan kingdom supplied Indian Buddhists with the ideal of their Divinity. But the Amaravati Buddha is not the Indian ideal of Divinity: it is a transitional type. In all the art of Amaravati we see Indian sculpture passing from the naturalistic school of the Ashokan epoch into the idealistic school in which Indian art reached its highest expression. The simple, direct naturalism of the Bharhut and Sanchi sculptures is here beginning to give place to a very pronounced style of an academic character, but wholly different to the style of Gandhara, though in the detail Gandharan, or Graeco-Roman, types frequently occur.

One of the finest and best-preserved of the Amaravati reliefs is a sculptured slab from the Museum. It represents the *stupa* itself, surrounded with its rail, with a crowd of adoring spirits, the *vidyadharas,* hovering round its summit. These figures are perhaps the most beautiful in composition of all, and they show clearly the idealistic treatment which had developed in Indian sculpture since the Ashokan period. The floating movement of these heavenly spirits is conceived with rare artistic feeling and a thorough grasp of the mechanism of the human body, although the details of the muscular system are purposely suppressed.

In the centre of the frieze on the top of the slab the Buddha appears receiving worship. Here, and elsewhere in these reliefs, he is clad in the same loose robe as the Gandharan Buddhas. This partially conceals the form and makes the idealistic treatment less conspicuous than it is in the nude figures of the *vidyadharas,* or in the Buddha of later Indian sculpture. In the small upright panel on the right and left of the centre are two very expressive figures of a Naga Raja and his wife worshipping. They are well drawn and modelled with more anatomical precision than the *vidyadharas,* as if to suggest a contrast between ordinary mortal form and a divine one.

This distinction, if it is intentional in this particular case, is not observed throughout the relief; nor is it characteristic of Indian sculpture as a whole. But it is easy to understand that the recognition of a special type of beauty for divine beings would very speedily resolve itself into a general idealisation of the human form in the same direction; the first step being its application as a mark of distinction for persons of high rank, and the next its adoption as a common academic standard.

The Amaravati reliefs, so far from being inspired by Western ideals, indicate a deliberate attempt to Indianise them: except for a few obviously borrowed details and *motifs,* there is very little that is distinctively foreign about them. The style and whole method of artistic expression are developments of the Bharhut and Sanchi school, as can be seen in the beautiful group from the British Museum. The slim-waisted figure standing by the horse, probably intended for Prince Siddhartha, shows the tendency towards Indian idealism. The two female figures, charmingly natural and full of feminine grace, are ordinary human beings like those of Bharhut and Sanchi, but the execution shows no trace of the Western academic style. The exaggerated thinness of the legs in all the figures was probably less marked when the sculptures had their finishing coat of fine plaster.

The foreign elements in all the Amaravati sculptures are not more conspicuous than those usually found in the art of any country which from its imperial position has become a centre of attraction for people of many and diverse nationalities. Nowhere do they justify the archaeological assumption that Indian art at this period was in Graeco-Roman leading-strings. If Indians were to apply to European art the same methods of exegesis as archaeologists apply to Indian, it would be easy for them to leave Europe with hardly a shred of originality.

There is this in common with the Gandharan sculptures and those of Amaravati—that both were inspired by the monastic schools of Northern India; the former employing foreign agents, the latter mostly Indian. The foreign artists of Gandhara were naturally slower in absorbing Indian impressions, derived from the philosophical schools, than the native artists. The great culture-centres of Asia at this time were the Indian Universities of Takshashila, Banaras, Shridhanya, Kataka, on the banks of the Krishna, and Nalanda: their influence was supreme, and compared with it the whole influence of Hellenism in

Indian art may be taken as a negligible factor. It is to the direct teaching and influence of these great educational institutions, rather than to the occasional intrusion of foreign suggestions and foreign technique, that we must look for an explanation of the development of Indian artistic ideals. For certainly the teaching of the Mahayana doctrine by Nagarjuna and the infusion of Brahmanical philosophy into Buddhism were the influences which shaped the ideals of Indian art, not the migration of Western artistic ideas eastwards. India was not then in a state of pupilage, but the teacher of all Asia, and she only borrowed Western suggestions to mould them to her own way of thinking.

(iii) ELLORA

THE wonderful monolithic temple of Kailasa at Ellora is one of the greatest masterpieces of Indian art. It illustrates one of the weird legends of the strife between Ravana, the ten-headed demon-king of Lanka and Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana.*

Ravana finding himself worsted in the war with Rama, flies in his magic car to Kailasa, Shiva's Himalayan paradise, and, placing himself beneath the mountain, begins to strive with all his demon's strength to lift it up, hoping to carry off Shiva and the whole Hindu Olympus, and thus masterfully compel the great god's aid against his mortal foes.

Ravana is shown in a cavern beneath Kailasa, exerting terrific force in his effort to raise it up. The mountain quakes, and Parvati, Shiva's wife, startled by the shock, clutches her husband's arm and cries out: "Some one is moving the mountain; we shall be overthrown!" Her maid is flying in alarm, but Shiva, only raising one foot, presses down Kailasa upon Ravana's head, and holds him fast.

The rest of the legend says that the wicked demon-king remained a prisoner for ten thousand years, until his grandfather, Pulastya, son of Brahma, teaches him to propitiate Shiva, and obtain pardon for his crimes by performing penances, and becoming a devotee of the god.

The story is told with intense dramatic force and imagination in this great sculpture. The whole execution shows an extraordinary command of glyptic technique, not only in the grouping and composition of line, but in the powerful and subtle treatment of the varied gradations of relief.

With the feeling of a Rembrandt for effects of chiaroscuro, the sculptor has concentrated masses of deep shadow and strong broken light upon the crouching, struggling figure of Ravana, which throws into high relief all the horror of his demoniacal power.

On the mountain-top where Shiva sits enthroned, the serenity of his paradise—hardly disturbed by Parvati's sudden movement and the alarm of her handmaid—is finely suggested in quieter alternations and gradations of relief, softened by a veil of half-shade which falls over them from above.

The license which the Indian artist allows himself, more especially in mythological scenes, of varying the proportions belonging to the same group has been used here with great judgment and discretion. The two principal figures in high relief, the attendant deities on the right and left, and the crowds of lesser divinities and celestial beings, all play admirably their respective parts in the whole scheme. And the astonishing freedom with which this great sculpture is carved from the solid rock, without any of the mechanical aids of the modern sculptor, makes it a splendid *tour de force,* quite apart from its high artistic qualities.

Both at Ellora and Elephanta, as well as at Ajanta and other places, the sculptures, like Greek statuettes of Tanagra, were finished with a thin coating of the finest lime-plaster, generally as a preparation for colour and gilding—a process analogous to the *ganosis,* or waxing, upon which Greek sculptors placed so high a value. This finishing has often perished by age, by ill-treatment, or exposure, but sometimes it has been deliberately removed by amateur archaeologists in their over-zeal for restoration. The process is still used by Indian sculptors and architects.

The Dashavatara cave temple at Ellora, is dedicated to Vishnu, whose cult is the principal modern rival to that of Shiva. Artistically the Vaishnavites may be said to be the inheritors of the old Buddhist traditions in India, for the principal icon of the Shaivites is now reduced to a single emblem, the *lingam.*

The sculpture represents a myth connected with Vishnu's appearance on earth as the man-lion, one of his ten incarnations.

The story is told in the *Vishnu-purana.* Hiranyakashipu, king of the Asuras and one of the door-keepers of Vishnu's paradise, had obtained from Brahma by severe penance the boon that he should not be slain by any created being. Inflated with pride, he then attempted to usurp the sovereignty of Vishnu, and ordered his son, Prahlada, to offer him the worship due to the god. Prahlada refused, and braved all the wrath of his infuriated father. When Hiranya struck him he only thought of Vishnu, and the blow fell harmless. He was cast into the fire, but was not burnt. With thoughts fixed steadfastly on the Preserver, he remained uninjured when elephants tried to trample him to death, and, when thrown fettered into the sea, a fish, at Vishnu's command, carried him safely ashore.

At last, as Prahlada continued always praying to Vishnu and proclaiming that he was everywhere and in everything, Hiranya tauntingly asked: "If so, why dost thou not show him to me?"

Upon this Prahlada arose and struck a column in the hall in which they stood, and behold, Vishnu issued forth from it in a form which was half man and half lion, and tore the impious Asura king to pieces.

The sculptor has chosen the moment when the terrific apparition of the man-lion rushes forth to seize Hiranya, who taken unawares and with the mocking taunt still on his lips, makes a desperate effort to defend himself.

(iv) AJANTA

THE period covered by the religious paintings of Ajanta extends from about the second or first centuries before Christ to about the seventh century of our era, or over most of the great epoch of Indian art. Unfortunately, owing in a great measure to neglect and ill-treatment these beautiful paintings have lost all of their original charm of colour, and are so damaged otherwise as to be at present only pitiable wrecks of what they have been. A singular chapter of accidents, combined with the usual economical reasons, prevented Mr. John Griffiths from doing full justice to them in his work on Ajanta, and it is to be feared that interest in Indian art, apart from archaeology, is not sufficiently strong to encourage any one to undertake the task of filling up the gaps before these almost unique records of early Indian art have entirely disappeared.

We can see in the best Ajanta paintings, especially in those of the caves numbered 16 and 17, the same intense love of nature and spiritual devotion as are evident in the sculptures of Barabudur. I must content myself with reproducing from Mr. Griffiths' work the very precious fragment of "The Mother and Child before Buddha" from Cave 17, which is quite on a level with the best Barabudur and in its exquisite sentiment comparable with the wonderful Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini.

Historically the most interesting of these paintings is a large one in the first cave, representing an incident in the reign of Pulikesin II, in whose kingdom of Maharashtra Ajanta was situated. Mr. Vincent Smith says of this painting:

"It is still easily recognisable as a vivid representation of the ceremonial attending the presentation of their credentials by the Persian envoys (from Khushru II, King of Persia, to Pulikesin, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, A.D. 625-6). This picture, in addition to its interest as a contemporary record of unusual political relations between India and Persia, is of the highest value as a landmark in the history of art. It not only fixes the date of some of the most important paintings at Ajanta, and so establishes a standard by which the date of the others can be judged, but it also proves, or goes a long way towards proving, that the Ajanta school of pictorial art was derived directly from Persia and ultimately from Greece."

In the last sentence Mr. Vincent Smith shows the unconscious bias of the European archaeologist. While it is perfectly true that the influence of Persian art can be seen at Ajanta, and in a great deal of the art of Northern India, it is obvious that in this case it can only be estimated at its proper value by a comparison of Ajanta paintings with Persian paintings of the same epoch, and not from the fact that a painting by Ajanta artists represents the reception of a Persian Embassy. The Ajanta school, according to archaeologists, had been in existence for seven or eight hundred years before this particular painting was executed, a length of time which is sufficient to establish a right to be considered Indian. Professor Grünwedel's recent remarkable discoveries in the old Buddhist monasteries of Turkestan will no doubt throw light on the affinities of the art of Ajanta with that of Persia and Central Asia.

In an essay on the Indian Schools of painting Mr. Vincent Smith says that "whoever seriously undertakes the critical study of the paintings of Ajanta and Bagh will find, I have no doubt, that the artists drew their inspiration from the West, and I think he will also find that their style is a local development of the cosmopolitan art of the contemporary Roman empire." Here again I venture to think that Mr. Vincent Smith, like Professor Grünwedel and others, confuses the assimilation of foreign technique by Indian traditional craftsmanship with artistic inspiration. The Buddhist monastic schools of Northern India, from which the art of Ajanta was derived, were sufficiently cosmopolitan in character to account for all the foreign details which are found in these paintings, but their title to be considered Indian is just as valid as that of the schools of Athens to be called Greek, those of Italy to be called Italian, and perhaps stronger than that of the schools of Oxford to be considered English.

The cosmopolitan character of these Indian philosophical schools, at the time when the foundations of Indian art were laid, was derived from the fact that they were rather schools of original research than schools of dogma and ritual. Every idea and every suggestion, whether foreign or Indian, would be weighed, considered, and, if found useful, thrown into one great crucible to form the synthesis which made up Indian philosophy, science, and art. It is a wholly misleading method of analysis to isolate details in these paintings which may be called Western and use them to prove that the inspiration of the art came from Greece or Rome. It is not the material used by an artist which shows his inspiration, but the way he uses it and the mode of his expression.

If the Ajanta paintings are placed side by side with those of Pompeii, which are true Graeco-Roman art of a period not very remote from their time, all the details to which archaeologists attach so much significance will assume their proper value in relation to the whole, and I venture to say that no artist would maintain that there is in these two schools any reliable evidence of being inspired by common artistic ideas, or of being formed upon common methods of artistic expression. The Ajanta paintings, as a whole, appear to be as truthful an interpretation of Indian life and thought at the time when they were painted as the Graeco-Roman paintings undoubtedly are of the life and thought of Pompeii. This must be taken as strong presumptive evidence of their artistic originality. Even assuming that Graeco-Roman painters and sculptors may have sometimes been the technical teachers in Indian schools, they can no more claim on that account to have inspired Indian art than Shakespeare's schoolmistress can be said to have inspired the tragedies of *Macbeth* and *King Lear*.

Indian art was inspired by Indian nature, Indian philosophy and religious teaching, and no one, I imagine, would go so far as to say that these were imported from the West. The little Greek, or Graeco-Roman, art that came into India went there in the ordinary way of commercial and political intercourse, not as part of any intellectual or religious propaganda. It was assimilated by Indian art in much the same way as a great deal of oriental art became incorporated in Italian art, from the time of the building of St. Mark's at Venice down to the palmy days of the Renaissance; but we do not say that Italian art was "inspired" by the East.

When Indian art went into Ceylon, Java, Tibet, China, and the Far East, it went with Indian missionaries as part of their philosophy and religion, and so vital was the influence of Indian thought upon the art of those countries that it remains evident after the lapse of two thousand years. India truly inspired the art of the rest of Asia, but neither at Ajanta nor anywhere else in India can the influence of Western art be called inspiration.

(v) The Building of Taj Mahal

The most famous of Shah Jahan's buildings owe much of their beauty to their faultless contours, the white marble with which they are faced lending itself admirably to the efforts of the masons to achieve this purity of line. The reticence in sculptured ornamentation which orthodox Musalman feeling demanded also helped in the same direction, while its jewel-like enrichment adds to the Taj Mahal a peculiar feminine charm.

Nearly all critics agree in recognising that this monument, built by Shah Jahan for his most beloved wife, Arjumand Banu Begam—otherwise Mumtaz Mahal, "the Elect of the Palace"—is unique in its evasive loveliness, so difficult to define in architectural terms, but most expressive of the builder's intentions that the fairest and most lovable of Indian women should have a monument as fair and lovely as herself. In this personal note, however, the Taj Mahal does not stand alone, for, the Muhammadan rulers of India took so keen an interest in the making of their own tombs that in many cases the personality of the man or woman can be seen almost as distinctly in the architectonic monument as it would have been in the portrait statue which the law of Islam forbade them to make.

From a purely aesthetic point of view some may even prefer the epic grandeur of Sher Shah's tomb to the lyrical charm of the Taj Mahal.

The want of understanding of Indian art which until recently has been universal in Western criticism has led many to give willing credence to vague suggestions that a monument so unique and beautiful could not have been created by Indian builders. These prepossessions are supported by a definite statement recorded by a Spanish Augustinian Friar, Father Manrique, who visited Agra in 1640 when the Taj was still unfinished, by which the credit for it has been fastened on an Italian adventurer in Shah Jahan's service, one Geronimo Veroneo, who died at Lahore shortly before Father Manrique's arrival, and told his story to a Jesuit priest. Italian adventurers are always credited with abnormal artistic gifts, and his improbable story has been too lightly accepted as proof outweighing all contemporary Indian accounts and—most important of all—the testimony of the Taj itself. A number of contemporary accounts written in Persian give a detailed list of the chief craftsmen and agree in placing first Master (Ustad) 'Isa, or Muhammad 'Isa Effendi, described as the "best designer (or draftsman) of his time." The list includes a dome-builder, 'Ismail Khan Rumi; two specialists for building the pinnacle surmounting the dome; master-masons from Delhi, Multan, and Kandahar; a master-carpenter from Delhi; calligraphists from Shiraz, Baghdad, and Syria; inlay workers who were all Hindus from Kanauj, and a Hindu garden-designer from Kashmir. Ustad 'Isa's native place is given variously as Agra, Shiraz, and Rum (European Turkey). The Turkish title of Effendi which is given him in some MSS. proves nothing as to nationality; and regarding the other foreign craftsmen, one would have to know something of their family history to determine whether they were Indian or not. The so-called Turks may have been Indian craftsmen in the service of the Ottoman Sultans, or of the Sultans of Bijapur who had Turkish ancestry.

It is said that Shah Jahan, in consultation with his experts, saw drawings of all the chief buildings of the world—a statement not to be taken too literally—and that when the design was settled a model of it was made in wood. Veroneo appears to have been present at these consultations, and he declared afterwards that he had finished the design which met with the Padshah's approval. The silence of the detailed native accounts on this point, and of all contemporary writers besides Father Manrique, would have little significance were it not for the silence of the Taj itself. It must be inconceivable to any art critic acquainted with the history of the Indian building craft that Shah Jahan, if he had so much faith in a European as an architect, would only have used him to instruct his Asiatic master-builders in designing a monument essentially Eastern in its whole conception, or that Veroneo himself would have submitted a design of this character and left no mark of his European mentality and craft experience upon the building itself. Shah Jahan was professedly a strict Sunni, and probably at the instigation of Mumtaz Mahal, who, like Nur Jahan, wielded unbounded influence over the Emperor, he had renewed the destruction of Hindu temples which had ceased entirely during the reign of his father and grandfather. He had broken down the steeple of the Christian church at Agra, and would hardly have outraged Muhammedan orthodoxy and the memory of his beloved wife by employing a Christian as the chief designer of a tomb which was to be peerless in the world of Islam. There is not the least evidence that Veroneo's position at the court was that of a builder or architect. Nearly all Europeans in the Mughal imperial service were artillerists, and it was probably in that capacity that he enjoyed Shah Jahan's favour. Father Manrique's story is not corroborated by any other contemporary writer. Tavernier and Bernier both allude to the building of the Taj, and they would certainly have given a European the credit due to him if they had heard and believed the tale.

Moreover, the idea that Indian builders of the seventeenth century worked, in the modern European fashion, after measured drawings prepared beforehand by the chief architect, and that the faultless curves of the central dome betray the mind and hand of a foreigner, is altogether wide off the mark. They worked then, as they do now, after a general idea, based upon traditional practice. When the general idea had been settled by Shah Jahan, the execution of it would have been left in the hands of expert advisers, and the dome built by dome-builder would be the latter's own creation, not a precise copy of a paper pattern or model set before him. So if Veroneo was so deeply versed in Indian craft tradition that he could design a lotus dome after the rules laid down in the *Shilpa-Shastras,* the dome itself, built by Asiatic craftsmen, would not have been his.

The building of the Taj commenced soon after Mumtaz Mahal's death in childbirth, and lasted nearly twenty-two years. Ibrahim II, the Shia Sultan of Bijapur, had died five years before its commencement, and the splendid mausoleum which he had raised to the memory of his favourite daughter, Zohra Sultana, and his wife, Taj Sultana, was probably still under construction when Shah Jahan was afflicted by the loss of his beloved Mumtaz Mahal. Ibrahim's Taj Mahal must have been then the latest wonder of the Mussalman world, and certainly it was keenly discussed by Shah Jahan and his builders. The dome of the Taj at Agra is the best proof of that, for it might have been built by the same mason who built the dome of Ibrahim's tomb. Both are constructed on the same principles: they are of nearly the same dimensions, and—a fact unnoticed by Fergusson and his followers—the contours of both correspond exactly, except that the lotus crown of the Taj at Agra tapers more finely and the lotus petals at the springing of the dome are inlaid, instead of sculptured, in accordance with the whole scheme of decoration.

Naturally, in the general idea of the monument Shah Jahan preferred to follow his own family traditions, rather than those of the Bijapur dynasty, and the Sunni propriety of his great grandfather's tomb at Delhi no doubt appealed to him. The florid sculpture of the Shia Sultan's tomb was too suggestive of Akbar's catholic tastes; but he could easily excel in the richness of the materials used, for Shah Jahan was the richest monarch in the world, and was prodigal in the spending of his wealth. Nur Jahan's and Mumtaz's fancy for the quasi jewelled marble dictated the choice of material and process of decoration. Shah Jahan's Hindu craftsmen with cunning hands made the most brilliant *pietra dura* work in the Persian style, carefully avoiding offence to Sunni prejudices. In the lovely pierced trellis-work which filled the windows and formed the screen with which the cenotaphs were enclosed it is likely that Bijapur craftsmen were also employed. Bijapur after Ibrahim's death could not hold its own politically against the Mughal power, and lost its prestige as a great building centre, while the magnificence of Shah Jahan's building projects lured the best craftsmen towards Agra and Delhi. The Taj Mahal is, in fact, exactly such a building as one would expect to be created in India of the seventeenth century by a group of master-builders inheriting the traditions of Buddhist and Hindu building, but adapting them to the taste of a cultured orthodox Muhammadan monarch who had all the wealth of India at his disposal. The plan, which consists of a central domed chamber surrounded by four smaller domed chambers, follows the traditional plan of an Indian *pancharatna,* or ''five-jewelled'' temple. Its prototype, as I have shown elsewhere, is found in the Buddhist temple of Chandi Sewa in Java, built more than five centuries earlier, and in the sculptured *stupa*-shrines of Ajanta. Neither Shah Jahan nor his court builders, much less an obscure Italian adventurer, can claim the whole merit of its achievement. The Taj Mahal follows the rule of all the great architectural masterpieces of the world in not being ''a thing of will, or design, or of scholarship, but a discovery of the nature of things in building a continuous development along the same line of direction imposed by needs, desires, and traditions.''

V

MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

In the early days of the Muslim domination the sumptuous qualities of Indian architecture and decoration had imposed themselves almost of necessity upon the conquerors from the north, who had yielded to the dazzling richness of such ornamentation. It was not till the fourteenth century that they began to react against it: the gate of ʻAla-ud-Din at Delhi is already more Iranian than the previous monuments; next, under the dynasty of the Tughluqs the overloaded Hindu ornamentation began to assume a more ordered character and Indo-Muslim architecture, without repudiating its deep-rooted native affinities, became more sober and severe. Finally, under the Mughals, this simplification was to lead to a harmonious fusion of Jain and Persian art, and to the birth of a new art which was of a genuinely original and classic nature.

At the outset the Mughal domination was marked by a fresh wave of pure Iranianism, as well as by the coming of Ottoman influence. Not that Babur had time to do much building: we owe him scarcely anything but the mosque of Panipat, built upon the site of his chief victory, and the Jami Masjid at Sambhal. But he sent to Constantinople for some pupils of Sinan, the celebrated Ottoman architect. Tradition has it that under the reign of Akbar, Sinan's favourite pupil, Yusuf, built the palaces of Delhi, Agra, and Lahore. None the less, Persian influence won the day. It has been observed that during the sixteenth century Persia plays the same part in relation to Indo-Muslim art as Renaissance Italy did in relation to that of France. But the first cause of differentiation which arose between them was the fact that the soil of India offered the architect richer materials than did that of Iran. What distinguishes Mughal mosques and palaces at the very first glance from similar buildings in Iran is the fact that, instead of faience, they made use of marble and hard stone, a fact which gave Mughal buildings a curiously more imposing appearance and secured them a far greater prospect of survival: while the mosques of Isfahan are crumbling into ruin, the Taj raises its white marble splendours eternally on high beneath the dome of the blue heavens.

The earliest buildings of the age of Akbar display all the strong and sober elegance of the Iranian style. This is true of the tomb of Humayun, near Delhi, a structure which reminds us both of Isfahan and of certain mosques of Constantinople in the age of Suleiman the Magnificent, and which must, as a matter of fact, have been built by some pupil of Sinan; but here Mughal art is already distinguished from the Turco-Iranian schools by its use of white marble and the absence of all polychrome decoration. Subsequently, however, the reign of Akbar achieved a fusion of native traditions with those of Iran in the sphere of art as well as in that of thought. The twofold influence is revealed in the buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri, a town built by Akbar between 1570 and 1574, some twenty-four miles from Agra. The plan of the sanctuary of the Great Mosque at Fatehpur is copied from that of the Juma at Isfahan. The triumphal entrance, too, or Baland Darwaza, dating from 1601-2, has a classic purity which is quite Persian, allowing for the different materials, which are pink sandstone and white marble; the cupolas which surmount it, however, display Jain influence. Indian and Turco-Iranian traditions are fused in similar fashion in another building at Fatehpur, the palace of the Turki Sultana, with the Panch Mahal, a pavilion with five storeys, "each smaller than the one below," and the Diwan-i-Khas, an audience-chamber formed of a single apartment, "in the middle of which rises an octagonal column surmounted by a gigantic round capital, from the top of which five narrow corridors radiate towards the angles of the building." This touch of fancy, these pieces of sheer bravura, which are incompatible with Persian classicism, are directly derived from Hindu and Jain art. The same combination of elements is to be found in the Great Mosque at Agra. "The building is charming in its colour-harmony of red sandstone, rosy stone, and white marble and is surmounted by Jain cupolas curiously reminiscent of Mount Abu."

The reign of Jahangir is signalized by the mausoleum of his father, Akbar, at Sikandra, five miles from Agra, which was completed in 1612; a most curious building, with its five terraces, one above the other; its polychrome materials of red stone and white marble, its balustrades, kiosks, and pyramid of buildings, which some have thought fit to compare with certain Buddhist *viharas* or with the *rathas* at Mavallipuram. To the same reign belongs the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula near Agra, which was completed in 1628—a magnificent white marble edifice decorated with coloured stones, half mosque and half kiosk, in which the Turko-Persian style is combined with strictly Indo-Mughal elements such as the two open-work pavilions at the sides and the "hat-shaped" roof crowning the central structure.

Under Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture reached its culminating point. The style of his reign is characterized by a new wave of Persian inspiration, but we should always bear in mind that the buildings which he constructed are distinguished from those of Isfahan and Constantinople by the use of white marble, enhanced by decoration in hard coloured stones—agates, onyx, jasper, cornelian, etc. At the same time, the taste of these buildings tends in the direction of a noble simplicity and "a truly feminine elegance." The principal monuments of this period are the Great Mosque (Jami Masjid) in the city, and the palace of the Mughal Emperors at Delhi, begun in 1638 and built of white marble, pink sandstone and brick, the Diwan-i-Am and the Diwan-i-Khas (the halls of public and private audience respectively), white marble galleries in which the pillars, arches, and ribs of the vaulting were completely encrusted with delicate Persian motives in jasper, onyx, and cornelian; in the middle stood the famous Peacock Throne, so called because the back of it represented a peacock's tail, glittering with rubies, pearls and diamonds. Equally elegant in the purity of its style is the delightful Mosque of the Pearl, or Moti Masjid, built by Shah Jahan between 1646 and 1653, also of white marble, inlaid with precious stones in floral motives in the Persian style. But the masterpiece of Shah Jahan's art remains the Taj Mahal at Agra, begun by that prince in 1646 as a tomb for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, and completed about 1653. Mumtaz died in the full bloom of her beauty, exacting an oath from Shah Jahan that he would associate her memory with the construction of an immortal monument. The monarch kept his promise and built this marvel of grace and taste, this triumph of Indo-Persian classicism, "a marble mausoleum, dazzling in the whiteness of its exterior, wonderfully sculptured, and carved in open-work, inlaid internally with mosaics of porphyry, agate, cornelian, and lapis lazuli of amazing finish." The setting adds still further to the beauty of the work: "The graceful dome of the Taj, its slender minarets, its trellises of fine marbles, as fine as lace-work, stand in the midst of a vast garden, where innumerable fountains play in cypress avenues and beneath groves of orange-trees." It is in this dream landscape that the young Muslim Empress, snatched from the love of the ruler of the world at the age of twenty, sleeps her last sleep.

The Taj has such purity of line that one would incline to attribute it to the genius of a single master. It was, however, the work of a whole group of them, and its peerless harmony is due to a blend of the most varying influences.

VI

INDIAN PAINTING

WHEN the Mughal school, in the middle of the seventeenth century, resolved into its original constituent elements through Aurangzib's banishment of Hindu painters from his court, the latter continued to find patronage at the Hindu courts and among the higher classes of the people. But the designation of "Rajput" which Dr. Coomaraswamy and other writers have applied to the extant works of the later Hindu painters is far too narrow and apt to be very misleading, for although the traditions of Hindu painting had more vitality in Rajputana than elsewhere, they were by no means exclusively Rajput. The classifications of "Mughal", "Buddhist", and "Hindu" which I adopted in the original collection made for the Calcutta Art Gallery are more correct.

In Mughal times and later there were Hindu schools at Banaras, in the Punjab and Kashmir, in Bengal, in Gujarat, in the Deccan, and in South India, besides the Buddhist schools of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, and Burma, which were unaffected by Muhammadan influence and are still alive. Burma, as regards painting, is still a *terra incognita* to Anglo-Indian and Indian connoisseurs, though, even in the present day, it has a very interesting traditional school.

At present our knowledge of the later Hindu schools is almost entirely confined to examples painted on paper, as the painters in the service of Hindu rajas imitated the fashions of the Mughul court in the same way as they now imitate the art fashions of Europe. But nearly all Hindu painters, when painting on paper, followed closely the traditional technique of mural painting, and their paintings are exact reproductions of the frescoes of the Hindu *chitra-shala,* or picture-hall. It is not unlikely that further investigation of the subject by Indians who can gain access to the private apartments of old Hindu families will reveal the existence of the original wall-paintings which are now only known to Europeans by small reproduction on paper. Indian artistic culture is still to a large extent an unexplored domain.

It is not possible in this brief summary to attempt to define the different local styles recognised by Hindu connoisseurs, but a few illustrations will serve to bring out some of the main distinctions between Hindu and Muslim painting. The choice of subject shows the difference as clearly as anything else. The Muslim painter was almost exclusively concerned with court and camp life, its pageantry and history. But as a courtier he never revealed its inner secrets or told unpleasant truths. Except when he illustrated the mysticism of Sufi poetry, religion hardly entered into his ideas of art; he reconciled his religious and artistic conscience by leaving it alone.

The Hindu artist, on the other hand, was both a court chronicler and a religious teacher. Vaishnava and Shaiva legends, in which the gods descended to earth, lived the life of the people, and performed wondrous miracles, were their favourite themes, treated with all the reverence of the earnest devotee. But though the Hindu painter imbues such subjects with a sensitiveness and artistic charm which are peculiarly his own, the appeal which he makes to the Indian mind is not purely aesthetic. His is no art for art's sake: for the Hindu draws no distinctions between what is sacred and profane. The deepest mysteries are clothed by him in the most familiar garb. So in the intimate scenes of ordinary village life he constantly brings before the spectator the esoteric teaching of his religious cult, knowing that the mysticism of the picture will find a ready response even from the unlettered peasant. That which seems to the modern Western onlooker to be strange and unreal, often indeed gross, is to the Hindu mystic quite natural and obviously true.

We are often reminded of the ancient Chandra cult and of India's name as the Land of the Moon by the frequent choice of night scenes—women praying at Shiva's shrine under the crescent moon; Radha seeking her beloved Krishna in the dark forest at midnight; two lovers riding by torchlight through a mountain pass; hunting by lamplight on the banks of a moonlit river; pilgrims sitting round a camp fire listening to the tales of a village Kathak.

The two illustrations given in Pl. LXXVII* will show with what rare intuition the Hindu painter interpreted the religious feelings of the people, and the penetrative insight of his communings with the spirits of river, wood and sky. In the first a mother with her son and daughter-in-law is worshipping at a wayside shrine under a tamarind tree. The draperies have suffered from unskilful restoration, but the power and feeling with which the effect of night is given makes us understand Rembrandt's interest in Indian painting. In the same spirit the great Dutch master illustrates Biblical stories.

The hunting scene, fortunately in a perfect state of preservation, is perhaps intended to illustrate Rama's life in exile on the banks of the Godavari. There is much in it, especially in the group of deer startled by the fall of their leader, to suggest a connection with the traditions of the classic Indian school, as we know them from Ajanta.

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* The number refers to the illustration in *The Handbook of Indian Art* by E. B. Havell.

Specially characteristic of the Hindu artist's spiritual outlook are the pictures representing the *Raga-Malas,* or melody-pictures, in which Indian music is translated into pictoral terms. A *Raga* in music is the traditional melodic pattern with which the Indian musician weaves his improvisations, each *Raga* symbolising in rhythmic form some emotion such as love, some elemental force such as fire, or a particular aspect of nature such as the forest at midnight, or the refreshing showers of spring associated with the playing of Krishna's flute as he dances with the cow-girls of Vrindavan.

The system of *Ragas,* or principal modes, vary somewhat. According to one of them there are six, appropriate to the six seasons with which the Hindu year is divided. Each *Raga* is sub-divided into five *Raginis,* which, again, have each eight sub-divisions or *putras.* The *Ragas* and their sub-divisions give the dominant idea of the musician's theme, the season and hour of the day or night appropriate for it, and by their magic create a suitable atmosphere. The musician, by the incantations of his song or lute, can like Orpheus, conjure with the spirits of earth and sky and flood and bring his hearers into touch with the harmonies of nature. The painter translates these melodic patterns into his own language by forming a mental image of the impression the music makes upon him—it may be the apparition of the special muse or divinity who presides over each *Raga* or *Ragini,* or the activity of the elemental forces which the magic of the music invokes.

Pl. LXXVIII* gives two typical *Raga-Malas.* In the first, Fig. A, the lady seated under a flowering tree is pouring out her soul in song to the accompaniment of her *vina,* while the pet gazelle by her side, the birds and even the tree seem to be attentive listeners. The next probably belongs to one of a Vaishnava series of musical modes—Radha is wandering over the moonlit fields of Vrindavan asking the peafowl where her beloved Krishna can be found.

The old traditions of Hindu painting still linger among the temple craftsmen of India, in the ritual of the Hindu womenfolk, and but rarely at the courts of the Hindu princes, though a few descendants of the old court painters still practise their art. A systematic investigation of these living traditions would certainly yield material of the highest artistic and archaeological interest, and help the technical development of the important new school of Indian painting.

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* Op. cit.

VII

THE MORAL ROLE OF INDIAN ART

THE more significant the art work, the more universal and impersonal is its appeal. Artistic genius consists in the expression of universals from concrete relations and situations. For man is so constituted that his profound satisfaction can come only from a conscious or unconscious identification of himself with other than—self. A lyrical poet, a musician, a painter, or a sculptor may so express the individual passions and sentiments of love, grief and exaltation that these become abstract, typical, and universal as embodied in all actual or possible relations and situations.

The Social and Ethical Significance of Early Buddhist Art:—In the Orient what largely passes for religious content of art is social and ethical. In the early Buddhist sculptured decorations at Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh Gaya and Amaravati we see illustrations of the birth legends of Buddha with exquisite characterisation and loving attention to details, depicting a moral tale that for all time to come stands for the glorification of certain social virtues like self-sacrifice, tenderness, compassion, purity and truthfulness that have been accepted by the Oriental peoples. At Sanchi we find illustrated in several reliefs the generosity of Prince Vessantara who gave away all what he had, including his children and wife, thus exhibiting "the perfection of benevolence". Similarly there is the story, depicted of the monkey-king who to save his suite of eighty thousand monkeys against archers who surrounded them cleared the river Ganga by a prodigious leap with a rope permitting the monkeys to cross safely. But a malevolent monkey who was no other than the traitor Devadatta in his past birth fell on his back and broke his spine. Or, again, among the reliefs at Amaravati and the frescoes at Ajanta we find the touching episode of the royal elephant sawing off with his own trunk his six tusks in order to gratify the wish of the Queen of Banaras. Similarly, there is the the story of the King of the Sivis portrayed in sculpture, who in order to save a dove that had sought refuge against a pursuing hawk in his lap gave his own flesh and ultimately his whole body as offering.

The Jataka Illustrations at Ajanta:—About the frescoes of Ajanta a whole book may be written. We have here the entire procession of Indian life from love-making, dice playing, hunting, procession of horsemen and elephants and march of armies in foreign lands to the episodes in the birth, life and death of the Buddha, from the sports of monkeys and elephants, and cock and buffalo fights to the flowering palasa tree along the trunk of which a swarm of ants climbs up. Nothing is here left out. A strong sense of naturalism and a broad humanitarianism have mingled with an intense spirituality to animate the graceful men and women and their chaste gentle poses and gestures. Even lovers have a refinement in their reciprocal attitudes and gestures which make amorous approach something of a ritual. The drama of human life, of love and death, happiness and suffering, is dominated by the sense of the transience of existence, and a profound emotion of piety, with which the beholder becomes saturated as he devoutly wends his way from cave to cave in this sanctuary. In fact the idyllic scenes of Indian life, the rich panorama of the flowering jungle or the pomp and pleasures of the king's court form the setting of the enchanting figures of the holy beings of wisdom and compassion, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, some of the loveliest and purest visions ever dreamt of and executed by an artist. It is they who epitomise in their lovely slender bodies and meaningful, supernatural gestures universal values that are recorded by the variegated pageant at Ajanta.

The Barabudur Bible:—Not merely Buddhist legends but also legends from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are depicted in bas reliefs and paintings in a thousand temples within the frontiers of India and in Java, Siam and Cambodia, where the Indian art traditions spread. In the great *stupa* at Barabudur in Java we have the procession galleries adorned by a series of some two thousand bas reliefs, illustrating the life of the Buddha. Referring to these Coomaraswamy observed: "We have here a third great illustrated Bible, similar in range, but more extensive than the reliefs of Sanchi and the paintings of Ajanta. This is a supremely devout and spontaneous art, naturally lacking the austerity and the abstraction of the early Buddhist primitives, but marvellously gracious, decorative and sincere. The episodes represented are by no means so exclusively courtly as is the case at Ajanta, but cover the whole circle of Indian life alike in city and village. The narrative element is more conspicuous than at Ajanta, the craftsmen closely adhering to the book".

The reliefs at Barabudur are so extensive that if laid end to end they would cover a space of about three miles. In these magnificent sculptured panels which have been seen by thousands of devoted pilgrims through the centuries, we see unfolded a poignant epic drama of human emotions in a cosmic setting where man reaps the fruits of good and evil deeds (*karma*) in previous births, where god, man and animal form links in a continuous chain of sequence of existences, inexorably working out the universal law of *karma,* and where the profound lesson is to end the uninterrupted cycle of births and deaths through the absence of desires and the good deeds of love, compassion and sympathy for all. Nothing is discarded in the scenic representations, the pomp of wealth, the might of arms, the ardent passion and serene grace of women and the beauty of nature, but all is subdued by the sincere expression of the triumph of purity and wisdom as embodied in the story of the Buddha's enlightenment. This triumph is expressed in every single gesture and mood of gods and angels, men and women, animals and birds in the vast panorama. Step by step, from gallery to gallery pilgrims are led through illustrations of the law of retribution of good and noble deeds, the story of the Buddha's preparation in the course of hundreds of past lives, the episodes in the life of the historical Buddha until they witness the search for the highest wisdom revealed by the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana. "When at last", writes Vogel, "the pilgrim has reached the summit of the *stupa* the phenomenal world vanishes from his sight and he is transported into the sphere of mere thought." The unity of the realm of Becoming has nowhere been more sincerely expressed in sculpture than here. Over the procession of human episodes which are linked together under a master-plan and in each of which every figure is absolutely unique and sincere in expression of face, gesture and pose of body, there broods the ineffable mystery of the oneness and harmony of life. Art here has immortalised itself by transforming small episodes and personal moods into the universals that help in the realisation of the oneness of life and of the divine wisdom which creates it.

The Intermingling of Gods and Men at Angkor Vat:—In Siam and Cambodia as well as in Java we similarly see the legends of the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata,* the *Srimad-Bhagavata,* the *Harivamsa* and other tales connected with Vishnu and Shiva illustrated in the fine sculptures adorning the walls of the temples. The churning of the milky sea, the death of Bhishma, the banishment of Rama, the loss of Sita, the fight between Vali and Sugriva, the alliance of Rama and Sugriva, the meeting between Sita and Hanumana in the Asoka grove in Lanka, the fight between the armies of Rama and Ravana as well as the episodes of the life of Hari and of Krishna are all depicted in the famous temple at Angkor Vat. Here again art has truthfully portrayed social universals among peoples who did not know the legends, but have absorbed them so sincerely and deeply that modern artists now draw frequently on them for their mural decorations in the pagodas of today. In the sanctum sanctorum Buddha, Vishnu and Shiva are installed in their divine aloofness like stars that dwell apart. But on the paintings and bas reliefs on the walls of the corridors leading up to the divinities are depicted the conjugal love and trials of Rama and Sita, the brotherly attachment of Lakshmana, the fidelity of Hanuman, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati and the trials, sufferings and sacrifices of the Bodhisattva in an all too-human setting. The gods who are the apotheoses of the social virtues come down with their human desires and sufferings to the level of the common people, while the men and women in their devotion, thanksgiving and purity raise themselves to the level of the gods. Shiva in order to save the gods and all living creatures undertakes the stupendous sacrifice of drinking the poison cast by the ocean or by the universe-serpent, Vasuki. Vishnu, Ramachandra and Krishna go through their hundred adventures for the sake of the protection of heaven and earth, gods and men against the Asuras. Similarly the Buddha prepares himself for the message of enlightenment for humanity through innumerable lives of sacrifice and compassion. Then they come down to the earth, and mingle with all life. What brooding pity and tenderness for all living creatures then radiate from them, and this is reciprocated by what trustful adoration of all! The figures of nude female worshippers arranged in serene yet animated throngs with their infinitely sweet and chaste poses and gestures of adoration cannot but be an unfailing source of inspiration for the pilgrims. Even the foliage of the forest, the sheep, the elephants and the lambs, the nagas or the water-spirits and the ripple of the waters participate in the cosmic devotion, not to speak of the homage of gods, angels and spirits of the upper air. Such is the picture the succession of mural paintings and sculptured panels unfolded before the throngs of observant pilgrims as they used to wend their way to the main shrine. Religions may change, kingdoms may perish, but the art which aids in elevating the moral tone of social life lives so long as society endures. It is the stress of the social universals that has brought about the merging with irresistible power of Beauty and Truth at Ajanta, Sanchi, Amaravati, Barabudur and Angkor Vat.

Biblical Scenes in European Christian Art:—The Javanese sculptured panels have been compared with Ghiberti's "Doors of Paradise" in Florence designed at the opening of the 15th century. Ghiberti, Jacopo della Quercia, Donatello and the Della Robbias presented many

Christian scenes with marvellous verisimilitude and elegance of composition. The creation of Adam and Eve, the Temptation and Expulsion, the story of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Christ before Pilate, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were all pictured by Ghiberti in delightful natural backgrounds with superb illustrational effect. Like the Javanese scenes the various events from the Old Testament and of the life of Christ and the Fathers of the Church formed the source of inspiration to generations of pilgrims who visited the Baptistry at Florence. Similarly, Donatello presented with tragical pathos the Scourging, the Crucifixion and the Deploration of Christ and with great dramatic vigour the scenes of Salome and St. John. A profound pity, tenderness and compassion as revealed in the poignant Christian drama were unfolded and the figures of Mary, Christ, Magdalene and the dancing angels and cherubims were especially depicted with great fervour and piety.

But the difference of treatment between Oriental and Renaissance art in Europe can hardly be missed. There is, in the first place, a tendency towards sentimentality marked in the Christian sculptors that found its apotheosis in the delicious Bambini and sweet Madonnas of the Della Robbias and Raphael. This is far different from the chastity and restraint of movements and the serene rhythm of gestures of men and women in the Amaravati or Barabudur reliefs. Many angels, Madonnas and cherubims in Christian art are similar, pictured it appears from local models. In the East there is no attempt at naturalism or realism but at the same time a marvellous plastic beauty of nude figures has been reached, soft, smooth and chaste, that is enhanced by the rhythm of the poses and gestures, every one of which is of high plastic value. The beauty of the human body in Oriental sculpture is far different from the Grecian or the Renaissance conception. Such beauty, constituted by the harmony of limbs and movements and expressions of the face, is plastically transmuted into something more subtle and expressive of the deep and noble stirrings of human soul, thus aiding in its attainment of wisdom and bliss.

The Notion of Super-sensual Perfection in Art:—Man's physical beauty appears in Indian art as the rapture of the soul; it suggests supernatural capacity transcending the limitations of physical well-being. It is far different from the form of physical perfection derived by classical Greek sculpture from the spectacle in the national games, and that became almost an obsession of Europe for several centuries. Mankind has also dreamt of other kinds of perfection, and so the norms and types of physical human beauty differ. The luminous beauty of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, Vishnu or Shiva is in subtle unison with the supernatural aims of the body as the receptacle of the soul. Woman's charm in India with the emphasis of full, rounded breasts and ample, slanting hips is the grace of motherhood that hides in the fair sex her supernatural possibilities.

The ideal of beauty of the human form in the West no doubt has been largely dominated by the inclinations and standards of classical Greece where the well-poised athletic form of the human male became the standard of human beauty. In the Orient the norms of the perfect male and the perfect female are different, and woman's beauty is the flower and herald of motherhood. The Orient in its sense of beauty shows on the whole not merely a sounder biological judgment but also a sounder psychological guidance. In Western art, except in the Middle Ages with their Madonnas, Angels and Saints, woman's loveliness and charm rather than the serenity and beauty of her soul have been stressed. In Oriental art we have not only the Apsaras' and the Nayika's captivating loveliness, like that of Aphrodite, but also the wisdom and tranquillity of Prajnaparamita, Tara and Parvati. Like the unique, serene and well-balanced figures of Buddha and Shiva, Indian sculpture, stirred not merely by the physical charm but also by the tenderness, wisdom and mystery of womanhood, has produced new types of feminine beauty that only have a spiritual import.

Metaphysical Conceptions in Art:—In Indian metaphysics the feminine symbolises the mind in creation and movement, not in rest and withdrawal that are symbolised by the masculine. Indian art represents the female divinity in the state of profound meditation only in such Buddhist images of the goddess of wisdom as Prajnaparamita and Tara seated in the rigid *padma* and *vajrasana* with the legs firmly locked in. Usually, however, the female divinities express movement, and are in the standing, gentle *tribhanga* or in *alidha* and *pratyalidha* poses in vigorous action against the forces of evil.

The female divinity or *Shakti* in Indian religion and art symbolises form, energy or manifestation of the human spirit in all its rich and exuberant variety. Thus the images of female divinities are far more diverse than those of Vishnu, Shiva or the Bodhisattva. The icons of the mother deity range from the benignant brooding motherliness of Parvati, the serene dignity of Prajnaparamita and Sarasvati or the nubile charm of Uma to the omnipotence and majesty of Durga slaying the demons and the weird vigour of the dancing and grinning Chamunda and Kali wearing the garland of skulls.

Religious doctrines in India lay down the injunction forbidding the sight of the nude female figure. But in India this injunction is got over by covering the female form with thin or transparent apparel or by representation only of the upper part of the body as undraped. Such, however, is the dominating sense of mystery and illusiveness in Indian iconography that the nude mingles freely and unconventionally with figures of religious or symbolical import.

Impersonal Love and Beauty in Art:—Contrasted with the silent and the poised or the vigorous and the grim supernatural types of beauty in Indian art are the types of loveliness as represented by the Yakshis, Vrikshakas and Salabhanjikas in Sanchi and Mathura and the Apsarases and Nayikas (celestial nymphs) in Khajuraho and Orissa in the later centuries. The Apsaras is the danseuse of heaven as the Nayika is of the earth. Each is free in her loves and wiles, unattached to the home and the family. In these figures Indian art expresses the delights and sports of sex, the incomparable charm of woman that lures men and gods. Such figures abound in the temples of gods and goddesses and embody the Indian ideal of feminine loveliness. About these Apsaras figures, Rothenstein observes: "Today we look at Sanchi, Badami and Ellora, or at the loveliest of all the medieval carvings at Konarak, Bhuvaneswar and Khajuraho and accept them gratefully with the dancing Greek nereids, the figures from Boticelli's "Primavera" or "Venus rising from the sea" as enchanting manifestations of man's delight in human beauty. The Apsaras takes an equally important place in the Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina arts. So racial a conception could not be changed with the form of religious dogma."

The tree spirits, the nymphs and the heroines of love embody in plastic language all the similes that classical Sanskrit poetry has used to meticulously delineate the features of female charm. The norms of beauty and of expression of erotic and seductive attitudes are in this case also not derived from any human models. Thus the Apsarases and the Nayikas of the medieval temples of Central India, Bengal and Orissa do not suggest gross sex but the sport and delight of the primordial energy (Shakti) that underlines the causation of the universe and of every manifestation or appearance. Such images of female beauty have in fact contributed towards the sublimation and elevation of sex to a supersensible plane, following up the entire medieval Indian religious thought that found the sex motif as the symbol of the cosmic energy explaining the conception and creation of the universe.

Enchanting male forms of human beauty are represented by the figures of Krishna in the medieval temples. There are, for instance, the South Indian bronze images of dancing Krishna (15th century) and the supremely elegant wooden image of Krishna Govinda of Southern India (17th century). It was, however, Rajput painting that created the most graceful types of human loveliness in the figures of Krishna and Radha, the incarnations of eternal youth and beauty in the Krishna legend. Nowhere in Oriental art has such bewitching loveliness of the human figures been limned with such lyrical intensity and tenderness. 'But even here the symbolism of the human soul (Radha) forsaking the world to unite with the divine, the eternal and universal bridegroom Krishna lends a profound mystery and other-worldliness to the treatment. Oriental art metamorphoses and exalts man's natural delight in human beauty and the associated eroticism into an abstract, intellectualised and universal sentiment that becomes the clue to profound knowledge, insight and striving. The incomparable figure of loveliness becomes also the social symbol or universal that effectively drains the unconscious of the individual, and prepares him, according to the state of his psychological development, for a generic and impersonal vision of love, goodness and beauty.

SECTION II

CULTURE AND HISTORY

VIII

THE FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF INDIA

THE character of India as a single country is easily missed and lost in her continental extent and diversity. The whole is too large to be grasped as a unit and is realized only in parts. It is just like the blind men seeing the elephant in the old adage, each taking one of its limbs he could feel by his touch, for the whole animal. Or we are reminded by the story in one of the *Upanishads* of the quarrel for supremacy among the different members of man's bodily organism, not realizing the common life by which each is sustained. It is difficult, indeed, to discover the One in the Many, the Individual in the Aggregate, the Simple in the Composite. Mere variety is, however, no proof against unity. It is, on the contrary, a sign of vitality, richness, and strength.

The geographical unity of India is, however, patent on the map showing how the country is sharply separated from the rest of the world by almost inviolable boundaries, very unlike the disputed frontiers artificially settled between most of the countries of continental Europe.

And yet the question remains: How far is this fundamental unity of India realized by her people or exemplified in her history? Nature's gifts are of no consequence unless they are harnessed to the service of Man who must know how to explore, exploit, and take advantage of them.

The first condition of the progress of a people in political life and civilization is its possession of a fixed and definite piece of territory which it can call and serve as its own mother country. A people that has not found a home for itself but lives in unstable and unsettled conditions, in unrest and uncertainty, lacks the conditions in which culture and civilization can take their rise. The nomadic is one of the lowest stages of civilization. The country is to a nation what the body is to the individual. It is necessary for its self-expression. The growth of a nation, no doubt, depends upon several unities, such as those of language, religion, government, common history and tradition, manners, and customs. But all these are secondary factors which have their roots in a common life in a common country.

The early progress of the Indians in culture and civilization was owing to their first grasp of India as their common motherland. Accordingly, they applied to the whole of India the designation of Bharatavarsha. The Puranas expressly define the term Bharatavarsha as "the country that lies north of the ocean (i.e. the Indian Ocean) and south of the snowy mountains (Himalayas), marked by seven main chains of mountains, viz. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Suktimat, Riksha (mountains of Gondwana), Vindhya, and Paripatra (western Vindhyas up to the Aravallis); where dwell the descendants of the Bharatas, with the Kiratas (barbarians) living to its east, the Yavanas (Ionians or Greeks) to its west, and its own population consisting of the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras (i.e. the Hindus)". (See Wilson's *Vishnu-Purana,* ii, 127-9.) The modern name India for the country is not an indigenous appellation but a foreign import. India was known to foreigners in olden times by its river *Sindhu,* which the Persians pronounced as

Hindu and the Greeks as *Indos,* dropping the hard aspirate. But the name Bharatavarsha is not a mere geographical expression like the term India. It has a historical significance, indicating the country of the Bharatas, of Indo-Aryan culture of which the Bharatas were the chief bearers. Once their country was settled, the Indo-Aryans built it up with all their devotion. It engaged their deepest sentiments of love and service as expressed in their literature. One of the commonest prayers for a Hindu requires him to recall and worship the image of his mother country as the land of seven sacred rivers, the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, which between them cover its entire area. Another prayer calls up its image as the land of seven sacred cities, Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (modern Hardwar), Kashi, Kanchi (Conjeevaram), Avantika (Ujjain), Dvaravati (Dwarka), representing the important regions of India. The spirit of these prayers is further sustained by the peculiar Hindu institution of pilgrimage. It expects the Hindu to visit in his life the holy places associated with his faith. Each of the principal Hindu faiths or sects has its own list of holy places, Vaishnava, Shaiva, or Shakta, and these are distributed throughout the length and breadth of India and not confined to a single province. Thus the different sects are at one in enjoining upon their respective votaries a pilgrimage to the different and distant parts of India and thereby fostering in them a live sense of what constitutes their common mother country. In the same spirit, Shankara established his four *mathas* (religious schools) at the four extreme points of the country, *viz.* Jyotir-matha in the north (near Badri-Kedar on the Himalayas), Sharada-matha at Dwarka in the west, Govardhana-matha at Puri in the east, and Shringeri-matha in Mysore. Sectarianism is thus an aid to nationalism in Hindu culture. In some of the sacred texts like the *Bhagavata-Purana,* or *Manu-Smriti* are even found passages of patriotic fervour describing Bharatavarsha as the land fashioned by the gods themselves (*devanirmitam sthanam*) who even wish to be born in it as heaven on earth, for the spiritual stimulus of its environment, and above these is the culminating utterance—''Mother and Mother-country are Greater than Heaven!''

All these prayers and passages show that the Hindu has elevated patriotism into a religion. In the words of a distinguished British critic, ''the Hindu regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty—whoever holds that sovereignty, whether British, Mohammedan, or Hindu—but as the outward embodiment, as the temple—nay, even as the goddess mother—of his spiritual culture . . . He made India the symbol of his culture; he filled it with his soul. In his consciousness it was his greater self.''

But besides religion, the political experiences of ancient Hindus also aided them in their conception of the mother country. The unity of a country is easily grasped when it is controlled by a single political authority. The ancient Hindus were familiar with the ideal and institution of paramount sovereignty from very early times. It is indicated by such significant Vedic words as *Ekarat, Samrat, Rajadhiraja,* or *Sarvabhauma,* and such Vedic ceremonies as the *Rajasuya, Vajapeya,* or *Ashvamedha,* which were prescribed for performance by a king who by his *digvijaya* or conquests made himself the king of kings. Some of the Vedic works and later texts like the *Mahabharata* or the Puranas contain even lists of such great kings or emperors. And apart from these prehistoric emperors, there have been several such emperors in historical times, such as Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Samudragupta, Harsha, Mihira Bhoja, and in later times, Akbar and Aurangzeb. Some even performed the horse-sacrifice in declaration of their paramount sovereignty, such as Pushyamitra, Samudragupta, Kumaragupta I, Adityasena and Pulakeshin I. Thus the institution of paramount sovereignty has had a long history in India. Its conception was quite consistent with the ideals set in their sacred works for kings who were encouraged to cherish as quite legitimate and laudable the ambition, which became them as Kshatriyas, of extending the area of their authority up to the limits of their mother country.

The unity of the country also manifests itself in the impress of a distinctive culture stamped upon it. That culture has been developed by its predominant people, the Hindus, numbering nearly 240 millions. The Persians had already defined India as the land of the Hindus, *Hindusthan*. Indeed, "India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul". Hinduism has imparted to the whole of India a strong and stable cultural unity that has through the ages stood the shocks of political revolutions, being preserved in its own peculiar system of social self-government functioning apart from, and offering but few points of contact with, the State, indigenous or foreign. India is predominantly a land of villages, and these villages were recognized as self-governing republics, with a complete apparatus of local institutions for the conservation of indigenous culture, unaffected by political changes at the top or in the central government. What are the characteristic features of this indigenous Indian culture called Hinduism? These are indicated in the indigenous definition of Hinduism as *Varnashrama-dharma*, the religion based upon the two-fold division of *varnas* (castes) and *ashramas* (stages of life), the most distinguishing and unifying feature of Hinduism. In its origin, as seen in Vedic literature, it rested on the division of society into four castes or self-contained social groups, the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya, and the Shudra. These in course of time became subdivided into any number of sub-castes. Now the Hindus all over India are divided into hundreds of castes and sub-castes. The principle of the caste-system, which is an outstanding peculiarity of India, is much misunderstood. It chiefly concerns one's private, domestic and religious life, and not public life. It only interdicts marriage between different castes (mainly on grounds of eugenics) and inter-dining especially eating from the same plate or eating the food that has been contaminated by unclean touch. Eating is recommended as the individual's private act, an act of prayer to God "the Giver of our daily bread". But the division into castes is only a part of the Hindu system. The other part is the division of the individual's life into well-defined stages or *ashramas* through which it should pass in its normal course. These *ashramas* are those of (1) the *Brahmachari* or the student, (2) the *Grihastha* or the householder, (3) the *Vanaprastha* or the hermit, and (4) the *Sannyasi* or the ascetic absorbed in contemplation. The third stage of life should begin at fifty, when a householder should retire from the world and family life and devote himself to wider and higher interests of life and to the service of others. The last stage of life is meant as preparation for its end through the severing of all possible earthly ties. As has been already pointed out, Hinduism in its external social aspect is thus made up of two limbs, the caste-system and the *ashrama*-system. Unfortunately more emphasis has come to be laid on the caste than on the *ashrama*. Caste divides, and that on the basis of birth. But the *ashrama* system unites, binding all castes in its common rules to lead life along a regulated course of development by natural stages.

The vehicle of this Hindu culture is Sanskrit. The unifying influence of Sanskrit can hardly be overstated. This has been well pointed out by Monier Williams (*Hinduism,* p. 13): "India, though it has more than five hundred spoken dialects, has only one sacred language, and only one sacred literature, accepted and revered by all adherents of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank, and creed. That language is Sanskrit and that literature is Sanskrit literature—the only repository of the Veda or 'knowledge' in its widest sense; the only vehicle of Hindu theology, philosophy, law, and mythology; the only mirror in which all the creeds, opinions, customs, and usages of the Hindus are faithfully reflected; and (if we may be allowed a fourth metaphor) the only quarry whence the requisite materials may be obtained for improving the vernaculars or for expressing important religious and scientific ideas."

This distinctive Indian culture in course of time so far unified the country that the country and the culture came to be identified and became synonymous terms. The country was the culture and the culture the country, the kingdom of the spirit, transcending territorial limits. Since its introduction to India at the time of the *Rigveda,* this Indo-Aryan culture had accordingly spread through the ages in ever-widening circles and regions known successively as Sapta-Sindhu, Brahmarshidesha, Brahmavarta, Madhvadesha, Aryavarta, Jambudvipa, or Bharatavarsha.

Effects on History: In spite of this fundamental unity of India, the vastness of its size, and the variety of its physical features and social conditions, had their own natural consequences to its history and political development. It has been always difficult to organise the whole of India as a unit and have it governed from one centre under a common sovereign or political authority. The result has been that what may be strictly called Indian history as an organic whole or a unified development like English history or the history of France has been rarely achieved. More often the history of India has resolved itself into a number of subsidiary, subordinate, and unconnected histories, without continuing as a common history for the whole of India. Instead of developing from one centre under a common direction, it has developed very often from different, and even mutually independent centres, losing its unity in the variety of separate and local histories of different peoples, and regions, evolving along their own independent lines and offering but few points of contact or agreement and more of conflict between them. Thus the political history of India has to be often traced and studied in parts and fragments, in interruptions and isolated restorations, and in many missing links. It has been shaped through the ages by so many different peoples and governments such as Maurya, Kushana, Andhra, Gupta, or Gurjara, for the north, and Pallava, Chalukya, or Chola in the south, or Moslem, Maratha, Sikh, and British in later times, functioning from different and changing centres like Pataliputra, Purushapura, Paithan, Nasik, Ujjain, Kanauj, Badami, Kanchi, Kalyani, and Tanjore; or Delhi, Poona, Lahore, and Calcutta, the headquarters of different political authorities in different epochs of Indian History. It was only once in Hindu India that the whole of India had a common history under the control of a common government, the Maurya empire under Ashoka who made his authority felt all over the country, and even Afghanistan and

Baluchistan as parts of an extended India, of which he became the paramount sovereign.

It must, however, be noted that apart from its size, the conditions of ancient times, the difficulties of communication in the pre-mechanical ages, which have now yielded to the power derived from coal, electricity, or oil, did not permit the establishment of a large empire or a centralized administration. A government to be effective, to get its authority habitually obeyed in the different and distant parts of a large area, had to be very much decentralized, giving full scope to local self-government. Thus there was inevitably more of local life and history throwing into background the general life and history of India. Indian history thus becomes a mere collection of local and disconnected histories and but seldom the record of one common political development affecting India as a whole.

It is, however, to be noted that behind this diversity of local history, there has always been in the background a kind of an all-Indian history which is from the nature of the case not political, but cultural in its character, the history of thought which transcends local limits and administrative boundaries. The whole of India bears the impress of certain common movements of thought and life, resulting in the development of certain common ideals and institutions which distinguish the civilization of India from all other civilizations of the world, and marks it out ''as a unit in the history of the social, religious, and intellectual development of mankind''. (V. A. Smith: *Early History of India*, 4th ed., p. 5.)

IX

THE UNITY OF INDIAN RELIGION

INDIAN religion placed four necessities before human life. First it imposed upon the mind a belief in a highest consciousness or state of existence universal and transcendent of the universe, from which all comes, in which all lives and moves without knowing it and of which all must one day grow aware, returning towards that which is perfect, eternal and infinite. Next, it laid upon the individual life the need of self-preparation by development and experience till man is ready for an effort to grow consciously into the truth of this greater existence. Thirdly, it provided it with a well-founded, well-explored, many branching and always enlarging way of knowledge and of spiritual or religious discipline. Lastly for those not yet ready for these higher steps it provided an organization of the individual and collective life, a framework of personal and social discipline and conduct, of mental and moral and vital development by which they could move each in his own limits and according to his own nature in such a way as to become eventually ready for the greater existence.

The first three of these elements are the most essential to any religion, but Hinduism has always attached to the last also a great importance; it has left out no part of life as a thing secular and foreign to the religious and spiritual life. Still the Indian religious tradition is not merely the form of a religio-social system, as the ignorant critic vainly imagines. However greatly that may count at the moment of a social departure, however stubbornly the conservative religious mind may oppose all pronounced or drastic change, still the core of Hinduism is a spiritual, not a social discipline. Actually we find religions like Sikhism counted in the Vedic family although they broke down the old social tradition and invented a novel form, while the Jain and Buddhists were traditionally considered to be outside the religious fold although they observed Hindu social custom and intermarried with Hindus, because their spiritual system and teaching figured in its origin as a denial of the truth of the Veda and a departure from the continuity of the Vedic line. In all these four elements that constitute Hinduism there are major and minor differences between Hindus of various sects, schools, communities and races; but nevertheless there is also a general unity of spirit, of fundamental type and form and of spiritual temperament which creates in this vast fluidity an immense force of cohesion and a strong principle of oneness.

The fundamental idea of all Indian religion is one common to the highest human thinking everywhere. The supreme truth of all that is a Being or an existence beyond the mental and physical appearances we contact here. Beyond mind, life and body there is a Spirit and Self containing all that is finite and infinite, surpassing all that is relative, a supreme Absolute, originating and supporting all that is transient, a one Eternal. A one transcendent, universal, original and sempiternal Divinity or divine Essence, Consciousness, Force and Bliss is the fount and continent and inhabitant of things. Soul, nature, life are only a manifestation or partial phenomenon of this self-aware Eternity and this conscious Eternal. But this Truth of being was not seized by the

Indian mind only as a philosophical speculation, a theological dogma, an abstraction contemplated by the intelligence. It was not an idea to be indulged by the thinker in his study, but otherwise void of practical bearing on life. It was not a mystic sublimation which could be ignored in the dealings of man with the world and Nature. It was a living spiritual Truth, an Entity, a Power, a Presence that could be sought by all according to their degree of capacity and seized in a thousand ways through life and beyond life. This Truth was to be lived and even to be made the governing idea of thought and life and action. This recognition and pursuit of something or someone Supreme behind all forms is the one universal credo of Indian religion, and if it has taken a hundred shapes, it was precisely because it was so much alive. The Infinite alone justifies the existence of the finite and the finite by itself has no entirely separate value or independent existence. Life, if it is not an illusion, is a divine play, a manifestation of the glory of the Infinite. Or it is a means by which the soul growing in Nature through countless forms and many lives can approach, touch, feel and unite itself through love and knowledge and faith and adoration and a Godward will in works with this transcendent Being and this infinite Existence. This Self or this self-existence Being is the one supreme reality, and all things else are either only appearances or only true by dependence upon it. It follows that self-realization and God-realization are the great business of the living and thinking human being. All life and thought are in the end a means of progress towards self-realisation and God-realisation.

Indian religion never considered intellectual or theological conceptions about the supreme Truth to be the one thing of central importance. To pursue that

Truth under whatever conception or whatever form, to attain to it by inner experience, to live in it in consciousness, this it held to be the sole thing needful. One school or sect might consider the real self of man to be indivisibly one with the universal Self or the supreme Spirit. Another might regard man as one with the Divine in essence but different from him in Nature. A third might hold God, Nature and the individual soul in man to be three eternally different powers of being. But for all the truth of Self held with equal force; for even to the Indian dualist, God is the supreme self and reality in whom and by whom Nature and man live, move and have their being and, if you eliminate God from his view of things, Nature and man would lose for him all their meaning and importance. The Spirit, universal Nature (whether called *Maya, Prakriti* or *Shakti*) and the soul in living beings, *Jiva*, are the three truths which are universally admitted by all the many religious sects and conflicting religious philosophies of India. Universal also is the admission that the discovery of the inner spiritual self in man, the divine soul in him, and some kind of living and uniting contact or absolute unity of the soul in man with God or supreme Self or eternal Brahman is the condition of spiritual perfection. It is open to us to conceive and have experience of the Divine as an impersonal Absolute and Infinite or to approach and know and feel Him as a transcendent and universal sempiternal Person: but whatever be our way of reaching him, the one important truth of spiritual experience is that He is in the heart and centre of all existence and all existence is in Him and to find Him is the great self-finding. Differences of credal belief are to the Indian mind nothing more than various ways of seeing the one Self and Godhead in all. Self-realisation is the one thing needful; to open to the inner Spirit, to live in the Infinite, to seek after and discover the Eternal, to be in union with God, that is the common idea and aim of religion, that is the sense of spiritual salvation, that is the living Truth that fulfils and releases. This dynamic following after the highest spiritual truth and the highest spiritual aim are the uniting bond of Indian religion and, behind all its thousand forms, its one common essence.

If there were nothing else to be said in favour of the spiritual genius of the Indian people or the claim of Indian civilization to stand in the front rank as a spiritual culture, it would be sufficiently substantiated by this single fact that not only was this greatest and widest spiritual truth seen in India with the boldest largeness, felt and expressed with a unique intensity, and approached from all possible sides, but it was made consciously the grand uplifting idea of life, the core of all thinking, the foundation of all religion, the secret sense and declared ultimate aim of human existence. The truth announced is not peculiar to Indian thinking; it has been seen and followed by the highest minds and souls everywhere. But elsewhere it has been the living guide only of a few thinkers or of some rare mystics or exceptionally gifted spiritual natures. The mass of men have had no understanding, no distinct perception, not even a reflected glimpse of this something beyond; they have lived only in the lower sectarian side of religion, in inferior ideas of the Deity or in the outward mundane aspects of life. But Indian culture did succeed by the strenuousness of its vision, the universality of its approach, the intensity of its seeking, in doing what has been done by no other culture. It succeeded in stamping religion with the essential ideal of a real spirituality; it brought some living reflection of the very highest spiritual truth and some breath of its influence into every part of the religious field. Nothing can be more untrue than to pretend that the general religious mind of India has not at all grasped the higher spiritual or metaphysical truths of Indian religion. It is a sheer falsehood or a wilful misunderstanding to say that it has lived always in the externals only of rite and creed and shibboleth. On the contrary the main metaphysical truths of Indian religious philosophy in their broad idea aspects or in an intensely poetic and dynamic representation have been stamped on the general mind of the people. The ideas *Maya, Lila,* divine Immanence are as familiar to the man in the street and the worshipper in the temple as to the philosopher in his seclusion, the monk in his monastery and the saint in his hermitage. The spiritual reality which they reflect, the profound experience to which they point has permeated the religion, the literature, the art, even the popular religious songs of a whole people.

It is true that these things are realised by the mass of men more readily through the fervour of devotion than by a strenuous effort of thinking, but that is as it must and should be, since the heart of man is nearer to the Truth than his intelligence. It is true too, that the tendency to put too much stress on externals has always been there and worked to overcloud the deeper spiritual motives; but that is not peculiar to India, it is a common failing of human nature, not less but rather more evident in Europe than in Asia. It has needed a constant stream of saints and religious thinkers and the teaching of illuminated Sanyasis to keep the reality vivid and resist the deadening weight of form and ceremony and ritual. But the fact remains that these messengers of the spirit have never been wanting. And the still more significant fact remains that these have never been wanting either a happy readiness in the common mind to listen to the message. The ordinary materialised souls, the external minds are the majority in India as everywhere. How easy it is for the superior European critic to forget this common fact of our humanity and treat this turn as a peculiar sign of the Indian mentality! But at least the people of India, even the "ignorant masses" have this distinction that they are by centuries of training nearer to the inner realities, are divided from them by a less thick veil of the universal ignorance and are more easily led back to a vital glimpse of God and Spirit, self and eternity than the mass of men or even the cultured elite anywhere else. Where else could the lofty, austere and difficult teaching of a Buddha have seized so rapidly on the popular mind? Where else could the songs of a Tukaram, a Ramprasad, a Kabir, the Sikh gurus and the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound spiritual thinking have found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation or close nearness of the spiritual turn, this readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an age-long, a real and a still living and supremely spiritual culture.

The endless variety of Indian philosophy and religion seems to the European mind interminable, bewildering, wearisome, useless; it is unable to see the forest because of the richness and luxuriance of its vegetation; it misses the common spiritual life in the multitude of its forms. But this infinite variety is itself, as Vivekananda pertinently pointed out, a sign of superior religious culture. The Indian mind has always realised that Supreme is the Infinite; it has perceived, right from its Vedic beginnings, that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an endless variety of aspects. The mentality of the West has long cherished the aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, one ecclesiastical ordinance. That narrow absurdity prances about as the one true religion which all must accept on peril of persecution by men here and spiritual rejection or fierce eternal punishment by God in other worlds. This grotesque creation of human unreason, the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty, obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the free and supple mind of India. Men everywhere have common human failings, and intolerance and narrowness especially in the matter of observances there has been and is in India. There has been much violence of theological disputation, there have been querulous bickerings of sects with their pretensions to spiritual superiority and greater knowledge, and sometimes, at one time especially in southern India in a period of acute religious differences, there have been brief local outbreaks of active mutual tyranny and persecution even unto death. But these things have never taken the proportions which they assumed in Europe. Intolerance has been confined for the most part to the minor forms of polemical attack or to social obstruction or ostracism; very seldom have they transgressed across the line to the major forms of barbaric persecution which draw a long, red and hideous stain across the religious history of Europe. There has played ever in India the saving perception of a higher and purer spiritual intelligence, which has had its effect on the mass mentality. Indian religion has always felt that since the minds, the temperaments, the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect liberty of thought and of worship must be allowed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite.

India recognised the authority of spiritual experience and knowledge, but she recognised still more the need of variety of spiritual experience and knowledge. Even in the days of decline when the claim of authority became in too many directions rigorous and excessive, she still kept the saving perception that there could not be one but must be many authorities. An alert readiness to acknowledge new light capable of enlarging the old tradition has always been characteristic of the religious mind in India. Indian civilisation did not develop to a last logical conclusion its earlier political and social liberties,—that greatness of freedom or boldness of experiment belongs to the West; but liberty of religious practice and a complete freedom of thought in religion as in every other matter have always counted among its constant traditions. The atheist and the agnostic were free from persecution in India. Buddhism and Jainism might be disparaged as unorthodox religions, but they were allowed to live freely side by side with the orthodox creeds and philosophies; in her eager thirst for truth she gave them their full chance, tested all their values, and as much of their truth as was assimilable was taken into the stock of the common and always enlarging continuity of her spiritual experience. That ageless continuity was carefully conserved, but it admitted light from all quarters. In later times the saints who reached some fusion of the Hindu and the Islamic teaching were freely and immediately recognised as leaders of Hindu religion,—even, in some cases, when they started with a Mussulman birth and from the Mussalman standpoint. The Yogi who developed a new path of Yoga, the religious teacher who founded a new order, the thinker who built up a novel statement of the many-sided truth of spiritual existence found no serious obstacle to their practice of their propaganda. At most they had to meet the opposition of the priest and Pandit instinctively adverse to any change; but this had only to be lived down for the new element to be received into the free and pliant body of the national religion and its ever plastic order.

The necessity of a firm spiritual order as well as an untrammelled spiritual freedom was always perceived, but it was provided for in various ways and not in any one formal, external or artificial manner. It was founded in the first place on the recognition of an ever enlarging number of authorised scriptures. Of these scriptures some like the *Gita* possessed a common and widespread authority, others were peculiar to sects or schools: some like the Vedas were supposed to have an absolute, others a relative binding force. But the very largest freedom of interpretation was allowed, and this prevented any of these authoritative books from being turned into an instrument of ecclesiastical tyranny or a denial of freedom to the human mind and spirit. Another instrument of order was the power of family and communal tradition, *kuladharma,* persistent but not immutable. A third was the religious authority of the Brahmans; as priests they officiated as the custodians of observance, as scholars, acting in a much more important and respected role than the officiating priesthood could claim,—for to the priesthood no great consideration was given in India,—they stood as the exponents of religious tradition and were a strong conservative power. Finally, and most characteristically, most powerfully, order was secured by the succession of gurus or spiritual teachers, *parampara,* who preserved the continuity of each spiritual system and handed it down from generation to generation but were empowered also, unlike the priest and the Pandit, to enrich freely its significance and develop its practice. A living and moving, not a rigid continuity, was the characteristic turn of the inner religious mind of India. The evolution of the Vaishnava religion from very early times, its succession of saints and teachers, the striking developments given to it successively by Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya, Vallabhacharya and its recent stirrings of survival after a period of langour and of some fossilisation form one notable example of this firm combination of age long continuity and fixed tradition with latitude of powerful and vivid change. A more striking instance was the founding of the Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus and the novel direction and form given to it by Guru Govind Singh in the democratic institution of the Khalsa. The Buddhist Sangha and its councils, the creation of a sort of divided pontifical authority by Shankaracharya, an authority transmited from generation to generation for more than a thousand years and even now not altogether effete, the Sikh Khalsa, the adoption of the congregational form called Samaj by the modern reforming sects indicate an attempt towards a compact and stringent order. But it is noteworthy that even in these attempts the freedom and plasticity and living sincerity of the religious mind of India always prevented it from initiating anything like the overblown ecclesiastical orders and despotic hierarchies which in the West have striven to impose the tyranny of their obscurantist yoke on the spiritual liberty of the human race.

X

THE CONTINUITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

THE coming of the Aryans into India raised new problems —racial and political. The conquered race, the Dravidians, had a long background of civilization behind them, but there is little doubt that the Aryans considered themselves vastly superior to them and a wide gulf separated the two. Then there were also some backward aboriginal tribes, nomads or forest-dwellers. Out of this conflict and interaction of races gradually rose the caste system, which, in the course of succeeding centuries, was going to affect Indian life so profoundly. Probably this was neither Aryan nor Dravidian. It was an attempt at the social organization of different races, a rationalization of the facts as they existed at the time. It brought degradation in its train afterwards, and it is still a burden and a curse. But we can hardly judge it from subsequent standards or later development. It was in keeping with the spirit of the times and some such grading took place in most of the ancient civilizations, though apparently China was free from it. There was a four-fold division in that other branch of the Aryans, the Iranians, during the Sassanian period, but it did not petrify into caste. Many of these old civilizations, including that of Greece, were entirely dependent on mass slavery. There was no such mass or large-scale labour slavery in India, although there were relatively small numbers of domestic slaves. Plato in his Republic refers to a division similar to that of the four principal castes. Medieval Catholicism knew this division also.

Caste began with a hard and fast division between Aryans and non-Aryans, the latter again being divided into the Dravidian races and the aboriginal tribes. The Aryans, to begin with, formed one class and there was hardly any specialization. The word *Arya* comes from a root word meaning to till, and the Aryans as a whole were agriculturists and agriculture was considered a noble occupation. The tiller of the soil functioned also as priest, soldier or trader, and there was no privileged order of priests. The caste divisions, originally intended to separate the Aryans from the non-Aryans, reacted on the Aryans themselves, and as division of functions and specialization increased, the new classes took the form of castes.

Thus at a time when it was customary for the conquerors to exterminate or enslave the conquered races, caste enabled a more peaceful solution which fitted in with the growing specilization of functions. Life was graded and out of the mass of agriculturists, evolved the Vaishyas, the agriculturists, artisans and merchants; the Kshatriyas, or rulers and warriors; and the Brahmanas, priests and thinkers who were supposed to guide policy and preserve and maintain the ideals of the nation. Below these three there were the Shudras or labourers and unskilled workers, other than the agriculturists. Among the indigenous tribes many were gradually assimilated and given a place at the bottom of the social scale, that is among the Shudras. This process of assimilation was a continuous one. These castes must have been in a fluid condition; rigidity came in much later. Probably the ruling class had always great latitude, and any person, who by conquest or otherwise assumed power, could, if he so willed, join the hierarchy as a Kshatriya, and get the priests to manufacture an appropriate genealogy connecting him with some ancient Aryan hero.

The word *Arya* ceased to have any racial significance and came to mean 'noble,' just as *un-Arya* means ignoble and was usually applied to nomadic tribes, forest-dwellers, etc.

The Indian mind was extraordinarily analytical and had a passion for putting ideas and concepts, and even life's activities, into compartments. The Aryans not only divided society into four main groups but also divided the individual's life into four parts: the first part consisted of growth and adolescence, the student period of life, acquiring knowledge, developing self-discipline and self-control, continence; the second was that of the householder and man of the world; the third was that of the elder statesman, who had attained a certain poise and obectivity, and could devote himself to public work without the selfish desire to profit by it; and the last stage was that of the recluse, who lived a life largely cut off from the world's activities. In this way also they adjusted the two opposing tendencies which often exist side by side in man—the acceptance of life in its fullness and the rejection of it.

In India, as in China, learning and erudition have always stood high in public esteem, for learning was supposed to imply both superior knowledge and virtue. Before the learned man, the ruler and the warrior have always bowed. The old Indian theory was that those who were concerned with the exercise of power could not be completely objective. Their personal interests and inclinations would come into conflict with their public duties. Hence the task of determining values and the preservation of ethical standards was allotted to a class or group of thinkers who were free from material cares and were, as far as possible, without obligations, so that they could consider life's problems in a spirit of detachment. This class of thinkers or philosophers was thus supposed to be at the top of the social structure, honoured and respected by all. The men of action, the rulers and warriors, came after them and, however powerful they might be, did not command the same respect. The possession of wealth was still less entitled to honour and respect. The warrior class, though not at the top, held a high position, and not, as in China, where it was looked upon with contempt.

This was the theory and, to some extent, it may be found elsewhere, as in Christiandom in medieval Europe, when the Roman Church assumed the functions of leadership in all spiritual, ethical and moral matters, and even in the general principles underlying the conduct of the state. In practice, Rome became intensely interested in temporal power and the princes of the Church were rulers in their own right. In India the Brahman class, in addition to supplying the thinkers and the philosophers, became a powerful and entrenched priesthood, intent on preserving its vested interests. Yet this theory, in varying degrees, has influenced Indian life profoundly, and the ideal has continued to be of a man full of learning and charity, essentially good, self-disciplined, and capable of sacrificing himself for the sake of others. The Brahman class has shown all the vices of a privileged and entrenched class in the past and large numbers of them have possessed neither learning nor virtue. Yet they have largely retained the esteem of the public, not because of temporal power or possession of money, but because they have produced a remarkable succession of men of intelligence and their record is notable one. The whole class profited by the example of its leading personalities in every age, and yet the public esteem went to the qualities rather than to any official status. The tradition was one of respecting learning and goodness in any individual who possessed them. There are innumerable examples of non-Brahmans, and even persons belonging to the depressed classes, being so respected and sometimes considered as saints. Official status and military power never commanded the same measure of respect, though they may have been feared.

Even today, in this money age, the influence of this tradition is marked and, because of it, Gandhi (who is not a Brahaman) can become the supreme leader of India and move the hearts of million without force or compulsion of official position or possession of money. Perhaps this is as good a test as any of a nation's cultural background and its conscious or subconscious objective: to what kind of a leader does it give its allegiance?

The central idea of old Indian civilization, or Indo-Aryan culture was that of dharma, which was something much more than religion or creed. It was a conception of obligations, of the discharge of one's duties to oneself and to others. This dharma itself was part of *rita,* the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained. If there was such an order then man was supposed to fit into it and he should function in such a way as to remain in harmony with it. If man did his duty and was ethically right in his action, the right consequences would inevitably follow. Rights as such were not emphasized. That, to some extent, was the old outlook everywhere. It stands out in marked contrast with the modern assertion of rights, rights of individuals, of groups, of nations.

Thus in these very early days we find the beginnings of the civilization and culture which were to flower so abundantly and richly in subsequent ages, and which have continued, in spite of many changes, to our own day. The basic ideals, the governing concepts were taking shape, and literature and philosophy, art and drama, and all other activities of life were conditioned by these ideals and world-view. Also we see the seeds of that exclusiveness and touch-me-notism which were to grow and grow till they became rigid, octopus-like with their grip of everything—the caste system of recent times fashioned for a particular day, intended to stabilize the then organization of society and give it strength and equilibrium, it developed into a prison for that social order and for the mind of man. Security was purchased in the long run at the cost of ultimate progress.

Yet it was a very long run and, even within that framework, the vital original impetus for advancement in all directions was so great that it spread out all over India and over the eastern seas, and its stability was such that it survived repeated shock and invasion. Professor Macdonell in his *History of Sanskrit Literature* tells us that, "the importance of Indian literature as a whole consists in its originality. When the Greeks towards the end of the fourth century B.C. invaded the north-west, the Indians had already worked out a national culture of their own, unaffected by foreign influences. And in spite of successive waves of invasion and conquest by Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Muhammadans, the national development of the life and literature of the Indo-Aryan race remained practically unchecked and unmodified from without down to the era of British occupation. No other branch of the Indo-European stock has experienced an isolated evolution like this. No other country except China can trace back its language and literature, its religious beliefs and rites, its dramatic and social customs through an uninterrupted development of more than three thousand years."

Still India was not isolated and throughout this long period of history she had continuous and living contacts with Iranians and Greeks and Chinese and Central Asians and others. If her basic culture survived these contacts, there must have been something in that culture itself which gave it the dynamic strength to do so, some inner vitality and understanding of life. For this three or four thousand years of cultural growth and continuity is remarkable. Max Muller, the famous scholar and Orientalist, emphasizes this: "There is, in fact, an unbroken continuity between the most modern and the most ancient phases of Hindu thought, extending over more than three thousand years." Carried away by this enthusiasm, he said (in his lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, England, in 1882): "If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature, we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

Nearly half a century later Romain Rolland wrote in the same strain: "If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

XI

EPOCHS OF INDIAN CULTURE

INDIAN culture must be viewed not in sections but in continuous time and the long career of our culture can be divided into four distinct ages.

The first, the Age of Expansion, can be traced from the civilisation of the Indus Valley, five thousand years ago, when the country worshipped the Pashupati in the Yoga posture, through the fresh young life during the age of Rigvedic *mantras* and the vigorous youth of the post-Vedic age of Janamejaya Parikshita; through the unbroken continuity during the age of Imperial Magadha (*c.* 700 B.C.-A.D. 320), the Classical Age of the Guptas (A.D. 320-750), and the age of Imperial Kanauj (A.D.750-1000).

The second age of our culture, that of Resistance, can be traced through the age of disintegration (A.D. 1000-1300) at the end of which the Sultanate of Delhi became an imperial power in India. At the end of the twelfth century Central Asian hordes flung themselves on India to burn, to loot, to destroy. Indians, who only knew how to wage wars according the laws of Dharma, were staggered by the totalitarian wars forced upon them. They then mobilised defensive resistance in other spheres of life, and the concentrated vigour of the barbaric onslaught was broken. Alien rule was segregated into the narrowest limits; inviolable defences—psychological, social and religious—were raised against any surrender to it.

The beginning of the third age, that of Modern Renaissance, may be traced to the end of the seventeenth century. By about A.D. 1700, Ramdas and Shivaji in Maharashtra, the Gurus in the Punjab and the Rajputs in Rajasthan had exchanged resistance for aggressive defiance. An expansive mood was in the air. But before Bharat could reap the harvest of this upsurgence, fate subjected her to political and economic domination by Britain. Undaunted, the upsurgence spread to different channels, to unexpected forms and quarters. The movements associated with Ram Mohan Roy, the Great Revolt of 1857, Dayananda Sarasvati, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, Tilak and Sri Aurobindo, Malaviyaji, Tagore and Gandhiji and the Congress, represent, each in their own way, the highwater marks of a progressively expansive attitude. Through the British Universities, established in India to train Indians for subservient careers, the culture forced its way as the Sanskritic revival, a great political awakening and a cultural renaissance. When disarmed after 1857, India projected her urge for self-realisation into a peaceful but all-sweeping movement which reached its climax in the nationwide *satyagraha* activities.

The fourth age commenced on August 15, 1947, when we became masters of our own destiny. But with our freedom has come a crisis in our cultural advancement. We have to face post-war problems, new world forces, and the power of a highly technocratic civilization with its industrial and urban problems, to all of which the fundamental values and the central idea in our culture have to adjust themselves.

In each age culture broadly expresses itself through four principal activities, social, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic, and spiritual. It has, therefore, to be studied in four corresponding aspects:

(a) Social achievements, with reference to institutions like (i) the family, (ii) the social organisation, and (iii) the State;
(b) Intellectual achievements like (i) political and legal concepts, (ii) speculative thought, and (iii) scientific advancement;
(c) Emotional and aesthetic achievements found in (i) religious movements, (ii) linguistic and literary development, (iii) art forms and traditions, and (iv) embellishment of life;
(d) Spiritual achievement—reintegration of fundamental values, and their adjustment to the dominant ideas and conditions of the age so that the Central Idea achieves fresh vigour and velocity.

II

Before the first age of formation began, Aryans in India had inherited the institution of the patriarchal family. The house community of pre-Vedic Aryans all over Asia and Europe lived round the family fire, and consisted of male descendants of a common ancestor. According to Fustel de Coulanges and Schröder, these Aryans, in sharp contrast with the matriarchal races, did not recognise any relationship with the mother or her relatives. Maternal right was foreign to them; only later the paternal right was raised into the parental.

The basic institution of the Vedic Aryans in India was the patriarchate family. The father was the lord and master of the family, both of its members and its assets. Ancestor worship was the central creed.

The *pitris,* manes, watched over the family; they had to be given *pinda,* offerings, at stated intervals or on stated days. When his dead body was consigned to the flames, the Jatavedas (Agni) was called upon to give him over to the *pitris.* A son was, therefore, an indispensable link in the chain which bound a man to his *pitris;* if there was no son, there had to be a son by adoption, i.e., by spiritual birth; but he had to be taken from the same family. ''The son is a substitute for the father in performing religious rites'', say the Vedas. The father, son and grandson owned the family property by right of birth. The *pitri-yajna* and the *tarpana,* the *pindadana* and the *shraddha* kept the spiritual unity indissoluble. The son was the saviour of the family, for he carried the *kula* forward. The basic idea was that the *pitris,* the living males, and the sons, born and to be born, were an indissoluble unit.

The *gotra* was a group of families claiming descent from a common male ancestor and was the unit of society; a federation of *gotras* formed the *jana* which claimed an eponymous hero as the common but remote ancestor. Intermarriage between members of the same *gotra* was forbidden. Five such tribes formed the *pancha-janah* who constituted the conquering race in the Saptasindhu of Rigvedic times. Their common ancestor was Manu.

Manu's law had even then the reputation of having been handed down from the *pitris;* and to the Aryan it was the law eternal (*esha dharma sanatanah*). He prayed that his race might not stray from the path.

Pride of descent from a common male ancestor carried with it the need to demand unswerving loyalty of the woman married into the family. Purity of descent is inconceivable without it. Marriage, in which man and wife became one, was the most inalienable of spiritual bonds. The purpose of marriage was *garhapatya,* i.e. householdership, comradeship in the worship of gods, and procreation of sons to secure heaven for oneself and the *pitris.* The wife was half of oneself, *sharirardha.* A man was complete only when he took a wife and had a son. The fall of a wife was a great lapse. The gods would not forgive it. Thus was established the fundamental value of the identity of man and wife joined by the marriage tie.

These values laid the foundation of Aryan culture. Even Parashurama had to kill his mother because she looked at a Gandharva.

III

The Aryans of the post-Vedic period were settled in the valley of the Yamuna and the Ganga. Large kingdoms ruled by the Aryan clans had come into existence. In this age the patriarchal family unit—*kula*—had become firmly established as the foundation of the society. The father was the supreme *guru* and the master of life. Ajigarta could even sell his son for a hundred cows. The Pandavas had to pass through years of trial on account of their supposed doubtful origin.

With the dawn of history in the seventh century before Christ, Magadha, under the Shishunagas, emerged as the predominant factor in the life of the country.

Our culture entered upon an era of triumphant expansion first under the Shishunagas, Nandas and Mauryas; next under Pushyamitra and the Sungas; and later under the Guptas till A.D. 550. Later on for about four centuries, the culture centered on Kanauj carried on the tradition.

The Age of Expansion ended when in A.D. 940 the Rashtrakuta conquerors of the South broke the power of Kanauj and the Sultans of Ghazni from 997 A.D. onwards carried out their raids rudely shaking the foundations of life. But the North-West had been overrun by the Hunas and allied foreigners; Dakshinapatha, the Deccan, under the Chalukyas, was vying with Uttarapatha, North India, for all-India supremacy and culture began to lose both its purity and creativeness.

The Sutras invested the family with semi-divine sanction. They laid emphasis on the headship of the father, the corporate character of the joint family, and the indissolubility of the *gotra*. The economic basis of the family was the ancestral property; the economic bond was strengthened between the ancestor from whom the property was inherited on one side, and the owner, his son and grandson who acquired interest in it by birth. This laid the foundation of a stable economic order.

Intermarriage between members of the three castes (the *dvijas*) without offending against the principle of *pratiloma* was the rule. Marriage as a spiritual merger of man and wife became a fundamental value. *Paraskara Grihya Sutra* indicates this alchemy: "With thy breath I join my breath, with thy bones my bones, with thy flesh my flesh, and with thy skin my skin." It was the age of Sukanya, Arundhati and Anasuya, of Savitri and Sita. Arjuna in the *Gita* expresses horror at the lapse of women from chastity, and at sons of mixed descent. A woman's loss of all rights in her father's property and acquisition of rights in the husband's, as laid down by the Smritis, provided the economic basis. In later centuries it accounted for the wonderful tenacity of our social institutions. During the later ages, this value was invested with tragic greatness in the Age of Resistance, thousands of women cheerfully lived up to the idea of going through the sublime self-immolation of the *Jauhar*.

The Gupta empire was dissolved by the inroads made by foreigners in the North and the West. The four allied martial tribes—an interconnubial group—of Praṭiharas, Chahamanas, Chalukyas and Paramaras became a military power, fought the East under the Palas of Bengal and the

South under the Rashtrakutas and founded the Imperial Gurjaradesha which comprised West Punjab, East Madhyadesha, Rajputana, Malwa and Gujarat, with Kanauj as the capital of India.

From about A.D. 600, the North and South each had its own line of Emperors, the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Kanauj and the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas of Vatapi and Manyakheta. The cultural classes of the North had been by heredity or education, deeply imbued with the values of Aryan culture. In the South, except in the case of Brahmanas, the culture was no more than an ideal pattern in which the existing social conditions were to be cast under the influence of Brahmanas and devout kings. Women in the South were in a sense free from the code which the Smritis enjoined; even in high society they were different from the women of the North, free in their intercourse with men.

With free intermarriage between the North and the South consequent upon frequent wars, intermarriage between the higher classes disappeared in the North. The martial races came to be much married. Disparity of cultural outlook among the families who thus freely intermarried led to a lowering of cultural values. The wife became a mere dependent. Islam also appeared in Sindh and, as is seen in the *Devala Smriti,* the wife forcibly converted to Islam created a new problem unknown before. *Anuloma* marriage became rare. The education of women came to be neglected or was rendered impossible; castes slowly came to be segregated into compartments. The partriarchal family unit and the marriage tie were accepted as sacred values in theory; in practice, among certain sections of the society, they were disregarded.

With the disastrous inroads of Central Asian hordes, the Age of Resistance was reached. I have called this 'the

Age of Resistance', because whatever cultural development we find during the period was more a product of determined resistance to the destructive forces which came into India from outside rather than of a direct contact with alien influences.

The Age of Resistance passed through several stages. The first and the darkest period was from Qutb-ud-Din to Akbar, and the second period of weakening resistance from Akbar to A.D. 1675. The administration of that law laid down by the Dharma-shastras, so far considered to be the duty of good kings, was neglected wherever the foreigners held sway.

The great centres of learning throughout the North were destroyed. The operation of free intellectual and moral forces was arrested. Society developed defensive conservatism. In about eighty years which passed between Medhatithi's commentary on Manu and Vijnaneshvara's commentary on Yajnavalkya, we find society completely changed in its attitude from an expansive almost aggressive, outlook towards world conquest to a frantic attempt at conserving all that happened to be current at the time. The joint family became more rigid; family life was allowed litle scope for freedom. Women, the most coveted of possessions, were protected, treasured in families by infant marriage, and in many cases by *purdah*. The wife was merged in the husband, but was no longer his partner. She tended to deteriorate into a parasite; not that anyone made her so; but fleeing from the terrors of the onrushing tide of destruction, she was helplessly reduced to that position. For instance, nowhere in India today is the *purdah* so rigid as in Rajasthan, which for several centuries bore the brunt of the onrush and, resisting grimly, saved the social structure and cultural traditions.

IV

The second great institution, the social organisation of Chaturvarnya, can also be traced through the different ages. In the early Age of Expansion, particularly in the early *Mantra* period, Brahmana was the professional priest; Rajanya the ruler-king; Vaishya, the villager who constituted the bulk of the Aryan community; Dasyus and Shudras were the non-Aryan, dark-skinned, noseless people with strange gods. But the germ of the Chaturvarnya was there. Those men who as a class dedicated themselves to learning and meditation were recognised as the head of the community. By their far-sighted social wizardry they converted the political supremacy of the Aryans over non-Aryans into a cultural hierarchy of the *dvija* (twice born) and the non-*dvija*. Transition from one class to another came to depend upon conformity to cultural standards rather than birth. The *Purusha Sukta* of the *Rigveda* period has left on record the first clear indication of the four-fold order of society. The four-fold order was devised to broaden and arrange the social system so as to absorb the non-Aryans without sacrificing cultural purity.

In the post-Vedic period, the four-fold order of society became a universal order, the men of learning and non-possession stood at the head; the Kshatriyas came next, though a clear tendency to look upon them as exalted is discernible. The incident of Brahmana Parashurama being made to suffer a defeat at the hands of Kshatriya Rama is an indication of a rival movement. But as the kingdoms grew, the kings could not do without divine sanction, and it was forthcoming only through protracted and costly sacrifices which a host of Brahmanas alone could perform.

When history opens with Magadha's imperial sway we see the struggle continuing in spite of the traditional arrangement. "The king had to find the *shrotriya,* for he was the half soul of the king; both were the upholders of dharma" say the *Shatapatha* and the *Aitareya Brahmanas.* But the Brahmanas, who had by then become the repositories of learning and statecraft, of poetry and science, were indispensable leaders of the community. They could prescribe law-texts; they could perform sacrifices; they could indulge in philosophic speculations; they could also produce political texts, the greatest of which Kautilya's *Arthashastra*—has few parallels, if any, in the political literature of the world. The theoretical pattern of society as the four-fold order had its antagonists too. Nanda was one of them. *Matsyapurana* refers to irascible and contemptible rulers who tried to destroy the social system.

The foundations of culture were so well laid in Chaturvarnya that, with the period which opened with the rule of Pushyamitra, himself a Brahmana, Chaturvarnya became accepted as an immutable social order. No doubt each province and each movement interpreted it as it liked.

Sri Krishna in the *Gita* ranges the four-fold order according to qualities and actions (*guna-karma-vibhagashah.*) Yudhishthira, in his dialogue with Nahusha, himself expresses a doubt as to the validity of hereditary castes. In the *Mahabharata* Indra enjoins Mandhata to bring all the foreigners into the fold of *dharma.* And Kalidasa's works reflect the beauty and vigour of Chaturvarnya at its best.

In the Age of Expansion, it provided a social pattern of universal application whereby new races were fitted into a living organisation, without destroying its stability and cultural standards. It utilised the principle of hereditary transmission of specialised functions to produce one corporation of men devoted to learning, another of men devoted to the martial arts, and a third of those pursuing trade and commerce. It stabilised society. It enabled the Brahmanas to work for intellectual and literary advancement. It enjoined on the Kshatriyas the duty to protect the social structure, to preserve the law, and by humanising and regulating war, to render the continuity of culture possible. The Vaishyas were to carry on the economic life of the people, undisturbed by political earthquakes. While this order emphasised heredity, it also had elasticity. It enabled outsiders to be absorbed easily or a lower group to rise to a higher level by adopting a more cultured way of life. It provided India with a living social gospel wherewith to make internal life coherent and external conquest full of meaning. Medhatithi says Aryavarta is not between the mountains and the sea; wherever an Aryan ruler spreads his arms, establishes Chaturvarnya and reduces the *mlechchhas* to the position of Shudras, there is Aryavarta.

In the Age of Resistance, Chaturvarnya played its part magnificently. The Brahmanas, driven from their ancient Universities, fled to distant villages, preserved learning and traditions, upheld the Smriti laws, and catered for the educational and religious needs of the people. The Kshatriyas, men and women, died in their thousands, to preserve freedom and faith. The Vaishyas bought from the barbarians safety for themselves and the rest, for their shrines and for their localities, and carried on their vocation with deft thoroughness.

When a cataclysmic upheaval followed the invasion, the Chaturvarnya became the fortress of life. Millions of refugees fled before the onrushing fury; subdivided themselves into rigid sub-castes; preserved their way of life; resisted aliens and their ways by the sharpest of collective instruments—social ostracism and sheer non-recognition of everything alien. If Chaturvarnya had not reacted so defensively, India would have been a charnel-house of Bharatiya culture. If the Kshatriyas resisted in every fort and village and their womenfolk courted fire in order to leave a mighty tradition of unsullied chastity the Brahmanas threw up *acharyas, bhaktas* and poets who brought about religious upheaval and literary renaissance and kept alive the inspiration of Sanskrit. The flag of the mercantile fleet of Gujarat owned by the Vaishyas continued to fly in eighty-four foreign ports throughout this age. We, who are blinded by an admiration of the social apparatus of the West, fail to realise that Chaturvarnya was a marvellous social synthesis on a countrywide scale, when the rest of the world was weltering in a tribal state.

''No doubt,'' says Sydney Low in his *Vision of India*, ''that it (Chaturvarnya) is the main cause of the fundamental stability and contentment by which Indian society has been braced up for centuries against the shocks of politics and the cataclysms of nature.''

Indian culture has been a dynamic force throughout history, and no better prooof of it could be found than in the vitality, tenacity and adaptability of its social structure.

XII

HINDU RENAISSANCE IN MIDDLE AGES
(A.D. 1300 to 1600)

THE downfall of Hindu political power in the Gangetic valley and following it in most areas of Aryavarta was a stunning blow to Hinduism, the more calamitous as it was totally unexpected and took place with lightning rapidity. For over one hundred years Hinduism lay prostrate before the invader, deprived of political, social and intellectual leadership. But the surprising fact that emerges from the first hundred and fifty years of Islam's conquest of north India is the strength of the Hindu religion and the preservation of the independence of the Hindu mind. Every door was open to the Hindu who changed his religion and accepted the creed of Islam. Khusrau, an outcaste-slave from Kathiawad, even ascended the Delhi throne for a short time under the title of Nasir-ud-din. With the short cut to prosperity and power so clearly marked out to them the Hindu people preferred political subjection and the indignity of being a conquered race to the surrender of their mind and their faith to the invader.

Slowly Hinduism recovered from the shock of foreign conquest and everywhere in Hindustan, even in areas directly ruled by Muslim Sultans, an intellectual and moral revival of Hinduism became visible, affecting every aspect of thought and generating new moral forces which helped to revitalise Hindu life and give it the dynamism which enabled it to reassert itself in due course. In the sphere of religion and moral thinking, in law, in literature and even in political ideals, a new life came into being in India by the middle of the 16th century, which may justly be termed the first Indian Renaissance. Politically, it is the undying glory of the Rajputs and their main claim to India's gratitude that a determined and unbending resistance to foreign invasion was organised by them and kept up with continued heroism for a period of four hundred years. The great Hammira whose glory is sung in *Hammira Vijaya* was able to stand up for a long time to the might of Ala-ud-din. Kheta his son even occupied Ajmer, and by the end of the 14th century the Mewar Rulers had risen to the position of a major power in North India. Rana Kumbha of this dynasty (15th century) may well be considered the representative figure of Hindu Renaissance. A mighty warrior, he was also an accomplished musician, a scholar and poet, great builder, and a staunch upholder of the *dharma.* The author of *Sangita Raja,* a classical work on music, he was also the commentator of *Gita-Govinda.* As a builder, he was pre-eminent as the Tower of Victory in Chitor described by Fergusson as "in infinitely better taste as an architectural object than" the Victory Pillar of Trojan in Rome, would testify. He built no less than thirty-two fortresses, truly magnificent specimens of military architecture, especially Kumbhalgarh which even Akbar failed to take by assault.

The resistance of the South to the Muslim conquest is well known. An important factor in this resistance were the Lingayats or the Vira Shaivas and an allied sect known as Aradhya Shaivas. According to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "in its single-minded devotion to Shiva. . . .and in its ideal of perfect equality among the *bhaktas,* the new Shaivism was a worthy rival of Islam, and the impetus it gave to politics had not a little to do with the failure of Tughluq rule to take root in many parts of Deccan.''*

These movements probably paved the way for the foundation of the mighty Empire of Vijayanagara which for nearly three hundred years upheld the cause of Hinduism in Peninsular India. Here also it was the spiritual and religious renaissance that is of special significance. The most oustanding achievement of the first years of Vijayanagara was the standard commentary on the Vedas which was prepared under the direction of Sayana, leading to a great revival of religious studies. If Rana Kumbha is the representative figure of northern renaissance, Krishna Deva Raya is his counterpart in the South. A scholar, poet and author of no mean merit he was also a great warrior and builder, a restorer of temples and a patron of learning. In his court flourished the *Ashta-diggajas,* the eight immortals of Telugu literature, while the Raya himself, as the author of the classic *Amuktamalyada* ranks among the shining lights of Telugu literature.

This great political revival both in the north and in the south was rendered possible only by a spiritual and literary renaissance which begins to take shape in the fourteenth century. The continuous strengthening of the Hindu social body, as a result of the recognition of the crisis arising from the impact of Islam, becomes evident during this period. Kulluka, the most famous commentator of *Manu-smriti,* lived in the early fourteenth century in Bengal. Chandeshvara, who belonged to Bihar and wrote a number of digests to the Smritis, claims that he was a minister and had himself weighed in gold in 1314. In fact from the time of Devala and Medhatithi to Todarmal in the time of Akbar, Hindu law was being continuously re-interpreted with the object of strengthening the social bonds and of providing Hinduism with a defensive armour. But side by side with this process of defensive equipment Hinduism was demonstrating its inherent strength by assimilating new principles and creating new vehicles of religious experience. The revival of Hinduism during this period—1300-1550—may be claimed as the central feature of the renaissance. The Vaishnava movement with its great devotional figures, from Jayadeva to Chaintanya, Ramananda and Kabir in the North, Namadeva, Vallabhacharya, and Narasimha Mehta in the West, arose at this period and transformed the Hindu mind. Ramananda's great movement, which is related to the earlier religious doctrines of the Tamil country, had its centre in Banaras, and to its influence can be traced the eclectic teachings of Kabir, the poetic mysticism of Nanak and the devotional ecstasies of Chaitanya.

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* *A History of South India* (1955), pp. 226, 417.

The importance of this religious revival, supported and upheld by temporal authority in the South, but essentially a popular movement in the rest of India, cannot be over-estimated. Every part of India shared in it equally. In view of the political divisions in Hindu India itself and of the authority of Islam over areas which were traditionally considered sacred, the universality of the religious movement, so far as the Indian world is concerned, is in itself a factor of supreme importance. Hinduism seems suddenly to have cast off her lethargy, called forth from the depth of her soul vast inherent powers of readjustment and set herself deliberately to a process of reorganisation. The great refashioning of Hindu doctrines which Shankara had successfully achieved prior to the Muslim invasion and which the great Acharyas, Ramanuja, Madhva and others had further supplemented, provided Hinduism with a fundamental unity in her philosophic thought. It is undoubtedly on this basis that the new reforming movements erected their structures, thereby enabling Hinduism to keep the new sects and cults within her comprehensive frame-work. But generally speaking, the religious movements of the period were non-ritualistic, based on *Bhakti,* and emphasising a theism, which while genuinely Hindu reflects also the vigorous monotheism of Islam. It is the one supreme God that is the object of the *Bhakta's* adoration; it is His grace and compassion that the devotee is asked to seek for salvation. All *Bhakti* cults are therefore essentially monotheistic, not in the exclusive sense that devotees cannot worship the same Supreme Being under other names, but in the affirmative belief that whether known as Shiva, Krishna or Devi they all symbolise the One and the Eternal.

The universality of the religious revival, i.e. its prevalence at the same time from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas is undoubtedly due to the pre-eminent influence that Sanskrit continued to exercise on the Hindu mind. In Rajasthan, in Gujarat, in the Vijayanagar Empire and after the 15th century in the Gangetic Valley itself, Sanskrit maintained unchallenged its supremacy as the vehicle of all-India expression. The literature produced in these three centuries is extensive. In Rajputana, in the southern courts of Vijayanagar, Tanjore and Calicut Sanskrit literature was cultivated with an enthusiasm which finds few parallels in the earlier periods. It is not however the quality of the literary works of the period which gives importance to it; it is its character as a vehicle of expression for the whole of India making it possible for movements in one area to have influence and authority elsewhere that gives to Sanskrit a supreme importance at this juncture. Sayana's commentary written in the Court of Bukka influences Vedic studies everywhere. Kulluka Bhatta's commentary on *Manusmriti* written in Bengal is studied all over India. The philosophical treatises of the Acharyas are taught in Banaras. Chaitanya in his wanderings in the South is influenced by *Sri Krishna Karnamrita* of Lila Suka, while the northern Mimamsa schools find their best interpreters in Kerala. It is in fact Sanskrit that gives an all-India character to the renaissance of the period.

Though the source of inspiration and the dominant authority is Sanskrit, the popular character of this movement is due to the growth of vernacular languages. Indeed it may be said that the revival of the Hindu mind and the growth of the great vernacular languages are phases of the same great movement. Everywhere at this time we find the local dialects emerging to a position of literary significance. Great writers interpret for the populace the classics of Sanskrit. A new devotional poetry of high quality marks the beginning of this literature, Vidyapati in Maithili, Chandidas in Bengali, Kabir, Mira, Nathaswamy and others lay the foundation of the new literatures. The translation of the great epics into most of the regional languages also belongs to this period and it is significant that they are practically at the same time in every part of India. At the time when the Niranam Panikkars were translating the *Ramayana, Bhagavad-Gita,* etc. into Malayalam, the same process was going on in Kannadiga, Telugu, Hindi, Bengali and Marathi.

The crisis brought about by Islam led undoubtedly to the popularisation of religion and literature. Sanskrit scholarship and religious learning had tended in the past to become more and more the monopoly of a limited class and the great achievement of the medieval Renaissance was to make religion popular by enriching the vernacular languages with a vigorous and growing literature. The supreme example of this movement is Tulsidas's *Ramacharita Manasa.* Though a Sanskrit scholar he preferred to write in the vernacular and defending his choice declared that his language was an earthen vessel which contained Amrita while Sanskrit was a bejewelled and rare cup of extreme beauty which held poison. The *Ramacharita Manasa* is not only a magnificent epic singing the great deeds of Rama, but a scripture of the people to which the entire Hindi-knowing world from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and from Amritsar to Bengal turn for spiritual sustenance, a code of ethics constantly on the lips of all from princes to peasants, and a truly fine expression of poetic genius. As a recent scholar, Kissan Keane, has stated: "It is impossible to exaggerate the influence that the great works of Tulsidas have had on the lives and learning of his countrymen. Above all *Ramayana* as a creation in literature and as an expression of religion stands supreme." In fact Tulsidas's *Ramayana* was the culmination of the great religious movement of which the great lights that preceded him were Ramananda, Kabir and Nanak.

The revival of Banaras as an all-India centre of Sanskrit learning was also a feature of the final phase of this movement. A new school of Dharmashastra of which the leading lights were Nanda Pandita, Mitra Mishra and Nilakanta Bhatta established again the primacy of Banaras in the world of Hindu scholarship. It became again under such great scholars as Kavindra Sarasvati and Nrisimha Bharati the radiating centre of Hindu culture. Khanda Deva the author of the *Bhattadipika*, Raghunatha Shiromani, the logician and the author of *Didhiti*, and Kamalakara, the astronomer, were but a few of the more notable scholars who proclaimed the revived glories of Hindu learning in Banaras.

It will thus be seen that the period from A.D. 1300 to 1550 witnessed a remarkable revival of the Hindu mind, an astonishing recovery from slough of despondency into which the people of India had fallen as a result of political conquest. It is the religion, philosophy and social thinking that were created during this revival which enabled Hinduism to reassert itself in the period that followed and gradually regain its pre-eminent position in India. It may truly be said that the foundations of modern India's life were laid during this period, and the Hinduism under which the vast majority of the people of this country lives was fashioned during this age of revival. The literature which the period produced was extensive and in many cases of supremely high quality. The period has also left us some magnificent specimens of Hindu architecture, the tower of victory of Maharana Kumbha and the magnificent monuments of Hampi. Nor is the age lacking in great figures in almost every sphere. Hammira, Kumbha and Krishna Deva Raya are men of heroic mould and would have been considered so in any epoch. Sayana, Kulluka and Nrisimha Bharati represent Hindu thought and scholarship at their highest level. An age which produced Vidyapati, Chandidas, and Tulsidas in the north and a host of outstanding writers in Gujarat, Maharashtra and the south must always be considered among the most productive in the long history of India. And yet it is when one comes to the religious life of India that the glory of the period is most resplendent. Ramananda, Kabir, Mira and Vallabhacharya in the north, Chaitanya in Bengal, Madhva, Vedanta Deshika and numerous others in the south give to the religious life of the period a vitality which Hinduism never seems to have enjoyed before. The medieval period may thus justly be acclaimed as the period of Hindu Renaissance, a great era of constructive thought and creative inspiration, without which the re-emergence of the people among the free nations of the world at a later period would not have been possible.

XIII

HINDU-MUSLIM ADJUSTMENTS

HINDUS and Mussalmans follow different religions and their social life mainly derives its sanction from them. Some of the religious rites and customs which each community follows to all outward appearance are irreconcilable. But in some of the most fundamental things the differences between the two communities are no greater than they are among followers of a faith going under one comprehensive name and who admittedly live peacefully and amicably as members of one nation.

The austere simplicity of the inside of a Muslim mosque with only prayer mats and water pots contrasts with the decorated images and paraphernalia of worship in a Hindu temple no more than the inside of Protestant or Presbyterian Church with nothing but seats for the worshippers and a pulpit for the preacher contrasts with the magnificent decoration and the images and paintings and candles of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet no one has claimed that the Protestants and the Catholics of England did not constitute a nation. Among the Hindus also there are sects which are critical of temples, images and many of the rites and ceremonies of other sects, who are also called Hindus.

Spiritual Influence: Apart from outward signs and symbols, rites and ceremonies, however, philosophers and saints, both Hindu and Muslim, have been known to dive deep into the mysteries of life and death and to proclaim the same faith in the Oneness of God.

"The legends of Buddha" to quote Dr. Bhagwan Das "entered into Muslim literature as the type of the saintly man, and Muslim hagiologists assimilated the stories of Ibn Adham to the Buddhist legend. Indian ascetics travelling in pairs and staying not more than two nights at one place were directly known to the Muslim adepts, who took from them their fourfold vows of cleanliness, purity, truth and poverty—and the use of rosary. What wonder then that the conception of Nirvana, the discipline of the eight-fold path, the practice of yoga and the acquaitance of miraculous powers were appropriated in Islam under the names of Tana, Tarika or Saluk, Moragabah, and Karamat or Mujiza".[1]

"But the man who produced the greatest stir in the Islamic world by the boldness of his doctrines was Husain-bin-Mansoor Al-Hallaj.... He travelled about in many lands, among them India, and thrice visited Mecca. At last his activities became so obnoxious that he was arrested in A.D. 922."[2] Mansoor's theories were later worked up in the systems of Ibn-al-Arabi and Abdul Karim Jili and in the poetry of Ibn-al-Farid and Abri Said Ibn Abulkhair and their influence spread to far off countries including India. Jili was acquainted with Hindu religion, for among the ten principal sects he noted the Brahima (Brahman). About them he says that they worship God in his absolute aspects, without reference to prophet or apostle. The scriptures of the Brahmana, according to him, were revealed to them not by God but by Abraham (Brahma); they contained five books, the fifth on account of its profundity was unknown to most of the Brahmanas but those who read it invariably became Muslims. Apparently Jili's fifth book is the Vedanta whose monistic philosophy in the eyes of Jili made it indistinguishable from Islam.''[3]

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[1] Dr. Bhagwan Das quoted in Tarachand's *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, pp. 66-7.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

''The Muslim mystic who sets out upon the path of union (*wasl*) or absorption (*fana*) always needs a spiritual guide, ''for if a man has no teacher his Imam is Satan.'' The guide or the preceptor (Pir or Shaikh) is the priest round which the whole machinery of Sufi monachism moves...... The disciple is advised to keep his Murshid constantly in mind, to become eventually absorbed in him through constant meditation and contemplation of him, to see him in all men and all things, and to annihilate his self in the Murshid. From this state of self-absorption in the Murshid the master leads him on through several stages at last to absorption in the Deity. Muhammad taught surrender to God (Islam), Sufism surrender to the teacher who is the representative of God on earth.''[4]

Haji Waris Ali Shah whose mausoleum stands at Deva Sharif in Bara Banki district in U.P. summarized the Sufi teachings in a few Persian verses—

''I say Pir is my God. To say this before a *munkir* (non-believer) is a mistake. O man! I ask one question. O believers, answer it. When fuel gets burnt in fire, when thread gets woven into cloth, then should I call it fuel or fire, then should I call the thread cloth or thread? So when my Pir got absorbed in God, the human being disappeared—all became God. I therefore bow to his feet every moment and have dedicated my life and being to his path. Love is superior to all the world inasmuch as it is the *millat* (Bhakti) of God the Great."

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[3] Tarachand: *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture,* pp. 77-78.

[4] Tarachand, *op. cit.,* p. 81.

Hindu scriptures also abound in references to the necessity of a Guru or preceptor who is to guide the disciple through the difficult and rigorous discipline he has to go through. Without such a Guru progress is practically impossible. In fact, "the Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is Maheshvara, the Guru is Para-Brahma Himself and to that Guru I bow" is a common everyday prayer. It is the duty and ambition of every Hindu to have a Guru and to be initiated by him.

The constructive part of Kabir's mission was to lay out a common path on which both Hindus and Mussalmans could tread together. "In the Pantha (way, sect) of Kabir, the Guru holds the safe position as in any other Sufi order. If it is true of the Sufis that 'among them the worship of God is the same as the worship of man' it is equally applicable here for says Kabir: 'Consider the Guru as Govinda (God)'. Nay more—'If Hari becomes angry still there is some chance, but if the Guru is angry then there is no chance whatever.' "[5]

Kabir also attacked with fearless indignation and trenchant language the whole apparatus of externalia which obscured the truth or separated the Indian communities from one another. He spared neither the Hindu nor the Mussalman. The entire teachings of Guru Nanak is but a synthesis of the fundamental principles of both the religions. By birth Kabir was a Mussalman and Nanak a Hindu, yet they are both products of the fusion which was going on despite outward separation.

Grants to Hindu religious institutions: In actual practice *rapprochement* proceeded in many other spheres of life. Muslim kings endowed temples and '*maths*' and granted jagirs to pious Hindus and Pandits.

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[5] Tarachand *op. cit.*, p. 158.

Students of the history of South India must have come across innumerable instances of such grants, made to Brahmans by Adil Shahi, Kutub Shahi and Asaf Shahi dynasties. Likewise such endowments were made to Muslim places of worship by Maratha rulers even after the political strife with Delhi Emperors.[6] The nucleus of the large Zamindari of the Mahant of Bodh Gaya whose yearly income runs into lakhs was a grant by Muhammad Shah of Delhi, who by a firman granted a village of Mustipur Taradih to Mahant Lal Gir who was the fourth in succession from the founder. Similarly the great Zamindari perhaps the greatest in India—of Darbhanga—owes its origin to a *firman* granted by the Mughal Emperor Akbar to the ancestor of the present Brahman Maharajadhiraj for his learning and piety. To encourage education among his Hindu subjects Sher Shah granted them *wakfs* and allowed them a free hand in their management. For this liberal policy he was liked by his subjects of all castes and creeds.[7]

Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin of Kashmir used often to visit Amarnath and Sharda Devi's temple and had houses built there for the comfort of the pilgrims. The Pathans of Majibabad ruled over Hardwar about 1780. The Nawab built big houses for the comfort of Hindu pilgrims which are still in existence and in possession of Hindus.

In Hyderabad (Deccan) the Brahman family was the Mutwalli of a Dargah of a famous Buzurg (pious man). The Nizams granted a big jagir to this Dargah and the public also made offerings. They also gave grants to several Hindu temples and Gurdwara. Similar grants and

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[6] Atulananda Chakravarty, *Call it Politics?* p. 44.
[7] Iswari Prasad, *History of Muslim Rule in India,* p. 339.

firmans from Musalman rulers to Hindu temples are still in existence and in possession of Hindus.

Even Aurangzeb by his *firmans* gave grants to the priests of the famous temple of Maheshvarnath and to priests in the village of Basti. On the other hand, the Hindus even now assemble in large numbers—-as large numbers as Muslims—at the Dargah of a Muslim saint or on the occasion of Urs fairs at places like Ajmer Shareef, Bihar Shareef, Maner Shareef and Phulwari Shareef.

Hindu masses have joined in the Muslim celebration of Muharram all over North India. It was not only in the processions that the Hindus joined; they actually observed Muharram like the Muslims in their homes as days of mourning and prayer.

The famous Portuguese historian Fari Souza writes in his *Dakhan-ki-Halat*: "There was no discrimination against Hindus, and they used to perform their religious rites and ceremonies without hindrance. The Mussalmans used to show great consideration for the religious feelings of the Hindus".

Sir Alfred Lyall writes in *Asiatic Studies* (p. 289): "But so far were they (Muslim rulers) from converting India that among the Muhammedans themselves, their own faith never acquired an entire exclusive monopoly of the high officers of administration."

Social Life: The influence exerted by the Hindu on the Muslim social life and custom and *vice versa* was no less remarkable. This is illustrated by the rites and ceremonies observed by both the communities in connection with the three most important and significant incidents in human life, *viz.*, birth, marriage and death. At the birth of a child, even in Muslim families, songs are sung as among the Hindus and the mother is considered to be impure for fixed days after the birth of a child.

Though marriage, according to Islam, is a contract, and according to Hindus, a sacrament, the pomp and procession, feasts and festivities, the songs sung by women, the presents, the practical jokes and playful practices are all alike in both the communities. In northern India, remarriage of a widow is not looked upon with favour in respectable Muslim families.

The Caste system has not left the Indian Muslims untouched or unaffected. The Syed, the Sheikh, the Pathan, the Malik, the Momin, the Mansoor, the Rayeen, the Qasab, the Raki, the Hajjam, the Dhobi and a host of other caste names may be mentioned to show the divisions among the Muslims.

Though inter-marriages among the Muslim castes are not prohibited, in most cases they take place within the group to which both the parties belong. The Muslim *bhangi* has no higher status in a Muslim society than a Hindu of the corresponding class. This is the influence of environment which the Muslims have not been able to withstand.

Large communities who have been converted into Islam from among the Hindus have carried with them and still maintain many of their Hindu usages and customs, even after a long lapse of time. The Malkhana Rajputs still maintain many old rites and ceremonies which they used to observe as Hindus. Many large groups of Muslims also retained till recently the laws of inheritance which they observed before their conversion into Islam.

Muslims who have come in close contact with the Hindus have not failed sympathetically to understand the Hindu taboos about food and have respected them. They have freely joined Hindu festivities in connection with marriage, child birth, etc. when invited and invite Hindus on similar occasions to their own homes and families. The habits of eating have not stood in the way of free and cordial relationship.

Throughout India we find real and genuine friendship and neighbourliness established between the two communities and a member of the other community being called *bhai, chacha* or *kaka.*

In the old-world economy, each village had its carpenter and black-smith, barber and washerman, potter and bangle-seller, grain parcher and oil-presser, the *mehtar* or *bhangi* and *chamar* and *dom.* Most of them had a part to play on ceremonial occasions, for which they got some special reward. Even though some of them might be Muslims, they rendered the same service as their corresponding Hindu professionals and were remunerated in the same way. For instance *the malis,* many of whom are Muslims, supply flowers for all religious functions and for daily worship of the Hindus.

Dress: A villager in Bihar or Bengal or the Punjab or the U.P. wears a dress which is practically indistinguishable from his Hindu compatriot. The pyjamas are worn by Muslims more largely than by the Hindus, but the number of Hindus wearing the pyjamas is not small. Muslims as well as Hindus wear *dhoti,* particularly in villages. The ornaments worn by women are common to both communities and many of them have their names derived from a Hindu or Muslim source. The *sari,* is worn by both Hindu and Muslim women. In the north and in the hills, where on account of severe cold, pyjamas are worn, they are worn by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

The purdah is entirely borrowed from the Muslims and yet, from locality to locality the system of purdah varies, but is common to both Hindus and Muslims.

The language that is spoken and understood in northern India, by whatever name we may call it, has undoubtedly been greatly influenced by, if it is not the product of, the joint efforts of Hindus and Muslims. The structure, which is the real frame-work of a language, is common to both forms of the language known as Hindi and Urdu. The difference is mainly in respect of a portion of the vocabulary. Muslim poets have composed devotional songs, the very theme of which is Hinduistic. The *dohas* of Rahiman are household property all over northern India like the *sawaiyyas* of Giridhar for their wit and wisdom. Hindus have contributed to Urdu literature. Even today, Hindus constitute a very considerabloe proportion of the people interested in and devoted to Urdu language and literature. Other provincial languages were also helped and owed not a little to the Persian or Urdu of the Muslim rulers.

". . . . It was the epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* that first attracted the notice of the Muhammadan rulers of Bengal at whose instance they were translated into Bengali, the language of their domicile. The first Bengali rendering of *Mahabharata* was ordered by Nazir Shah of Bengal (1282-1385 A.D.) who was great patron of the vernacular of the province and whom the great poet Vidyapati has immortalised by dedicating to him one of his songs. . . . . Emperor Husain Shah was a great patron of Bengali. Haladhar Basu was appointed by him to translate the *Bhagavata-Purana* into Bengali, ... Paragal Khan, a general of Husain Shah, and his son Chhuti Khan, have made themselves immortal by associating their names with the Bengali translation of a portion of the *Mahabharata*.[8]

Thus Bengali is the language of both Hindus and Mussalmans of Bengal. So is Gujarati or Gujarat and

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[8] N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule,* pp. 107-110.

Punjabi of Punjab and Hindi or Urdu or Hindusthani or by whatever other name one chooses to call it, of northern India including the whole area from the borders of Punjab to the borders of Bengal on one side and from the foot of the Himalayas to the borders of Marathi-speaking and Telugu-speaking provinces in the central and southern India. There is no division of the population in any part of India which coincides both in respect of language and religion. The distribution of language is territorial and not communal or religious.

It is thus clear that in spite of all differences and distinctions that exist between Hindus and Muslims it is idle to deny that both have laboured and lived to develop a joint culture which is the Indian culture and which at once distinguishes an Indian from any foreigner coming from the West or the East, whether from other continents and countries of the Old World or the New World.

XIV

THE CLASSICAL AGE

THE period of Indian History from A.D. 320, when the Gupta Empire was founded, to about A.D. 740, when Yashovarman of Kanauj died, is rightly called the 'Classical Age' of India.

Empires rise, decline and fall; communities and nations integrate or disintegrate; the latter either develop a collective mind, outlook and will, or lose one or the other only to lose them all eventually. In the one case they evolve an articulate personality; in the other they cast it off and disappear.

Throughout the history of India, the process of integration comprises two simultaneous movements: one owes its origin to Aryan culture and operates by virtue of the momentum which the values of that culture possess; the other works itself upward from the way of life of the early Dravidian and other non-Aryan cultures in the country into the framework of the Aryan culture modifying its form and content, though not the fundamentals, weaving a harmonious pattern continuously. The first movement provides vitality and synthesis; the second contributes vigour and variety. But it is the harmonious adjustment of both that gives India, age after age, her strength, tenacity and sense of mission.

II

The evolution of India, during the period of the Magadhan supremacy, began with the dawn of history in India, in the seventh century before Christ. But long before this, Indians, who had adopted the Aryan way of life, had developed a common way of life; and their sense of unity, preserved by tradition and activated by race-memory, recaptured in each generation, was expressed through common action. By vitalising the fundamental values of their culture, they had created vigorous adjustments necessitated by the conditions of each age. During this process, the best elements in the society had, from the earliest times, developed a ruling purpose—the fulfilment of *Rita* or *Dharma*—which gave them the capacity to will themselves into a well-defined and vigorous social organism.

The Magadhan Period closed with the invasion of the Yueh-chis. Disintegration followed in the northern and western India and was accentuated by the break up of the Kushana Empire which they had founded. The process of integration was also hindered by Buddhism which was not organically rooted in race memory and race tradition, and stood, in many respects, in antagonism to them. But it was an expansive movement and naturally attracted foreigners; in India, it stimulated the national mind and culture by impact rather than by inspiration. The Shungas and the Satavahana conquerors however drew strength from its roots.

The third century after Christ is still shrouded in obscurity. But, according to the *Bhagavata-Purana*, northern India was undergoing a period of disintegration. Nagas ruled in Champavati and Mathura; Abhiras ruled in Saurashtra and Avanti; in the region of Abu and Malava the rulers were devoid of culture "like unto the *Mlechchha*". In Sindh, on the banks of the Chandrabhaga, in the Kunti in Kashmir, the Shudras, Vratyas and the *Mlechchhas* ruled. These rulers, the author says, lacked the power of the Spirit, disregarded *Dharma* and Truth, and were "contemptible and irascible". His only hope lay in the new rulers, Vishvasphani in Magadha and Vindhyashakti, a Brahmana, ruling on the banks of the Narmada.

But there is little doubt, that by the beginning of the fourth century, the forces of disintegration had lost their momentum. In southern India the old forces were being given new forms and directions.

III

In the beginning of the fourth century, the powerful Pallava king Shivaskandavarman in southern India celebrated the *Ashvamedha.* About A.D. 320, Chandragupta I, the founder of the Gupta Empire, revived the *chakravarti* ideal in northern India. His marriage with Kumaradevi, the Lichchhavi princess, probably resulted in the union of her principality with Magadha and launched him on a career of wide conquests. Fortunately for him, there was no other rival for imperial supremacy in northern India at the time and no foreign invader threatened the country from the north-west.

Placed between A.D. 355-380, Samudragupta, the next Emperor, laid the foundation of an irresistible military machine which probably included a navy. With his large standing army, he wiped out the feeble kings and effete republics of the Gangetic basin. The territory from Hardwar to the borders of Assam was consolidated into a compact homeland which he directly administered under a system which, with suitable modifications, was soon adopted in many parts of the country and persisted in some form even up to the British period. Samudragupta's sacred horse, followed by his army, extracted tribute from the kings ruling in most parts of the country and served to bring about friendly relations with the Shahanushahi kings of the north-west. He reached the zenith of his power when he performed the *Ashvamedha* sacrifice and gave munificent donations.

Politically, this was the age of integration in India. After more than three hundred years of fragmentation and foreign domination, northern India was again united under the vigorous rule of a powerful monarch of versatile talents. A brilliant general, a farsighted statesman, a man of culture and a patron of the arts and letters, he became the symbol and architect of a mighty creative urge among the people which, while drawing vitality from tradition and race-memory, took on a new shape and power.

Samudragupta was succeeded by his no less brilliant son, Chandragupta II, known as Vikramaditya, acclaimed as the greatest of the Gupta Emperors. In his reign, which is placed between A.D. 376 and 414, the last vestige of foreign rule disappeared from the land and the direct sway of Pataliputra extended from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. The country to the south of the Narmada was dominated by two friendly powers—the Vakatakas and the Pallavas—who shared the Gupta Emperors' enthusiasm for strengthening *Dharma*. The dominions of the descendants of Vakataka Vindhyashakti extended from Bundelkhand to Hyderabad. A daughter of Chandragupta II was married to one of them, and she ruled as regent for thirteen years; and till the dynasty disappeared, the Vakatakas continued in friendly alliance with the Guptas. The Pallavas, who held unquestioned sway in the south, also maintained friendly relations with the Guptas, even when they were not subject to their hegemony.

Under the leadership of Chandragupta II, the Gupta eagles flew over parts of Balkh across the Hindu Kush.

Peace, plenty and power, associated with an all-pervading moral sense, were, in his reign, integrated with an intellectual and cultural efflorescence, and to the mind of the succeeding generations, it symbolised the fulfilment of the highest national aspirations.

IV

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son, Kumaragupta (A.D. 415-455) and, later, by his grandson, Skandagupta (A.D. 455-467) who inflicted a defeat on the invading Hunas. Both of them stabilised what their predecessors had acquired and consolidated. These one hundred and fifty years of Gupta rule can rightly be called the Golden Prime of India.

The Gupta Emperors upheld *Dharma* in all its aspects and, in consequence, its content was enriched and its scope enlarged. An overarching law of life, though it existed from Vedic times, it received under them the form which in the main it still retains. They drew their inspiration from it, and in so doing carried the people with them. Historical continuity and conscious unity were preserved by a faith in the Vedas as the source of all knowledge and inspiration. Within the framework of this faith, myths, traditions and rituals, language and literature, and canons of conduct, ideals and modes of life, became integrating agencies. Through the Puranas, which sang of sacred legends of rivers, mountains, cities, of royal houses, and of semi-divine heroes and sages, the past remained a glorious heritage to inspire the future with fresh vigour.

In this age, the most powerful integrating force were the Dharmashastras. They provided the basis of Aryan society and the mode of social adjustment; prescribed laws of inheritance and of civil and criminal justice; and laid down rules to govern all major situations from birth to death. Of them all, *Manu-smriti* was held in the highest sanctity throughout the country, not only in the north but in the south as well. The Tamil kings upheld its authority; one of the oldest classics of Tamil literature bears the clear impress of its great influence.

Theoretically, according to the Dharmashastras, the social structure envisaged a four-fold order of social groups, Chaturvarnya; in fact, it was hierarchy of such groups ranged according to the standard of culture attained by each with intervening groups to accommodate products of racial fusion. The Brahmanas stood at its head as devoted to learning, culture and self-discipline. The hierarchy was cultural, not a racial one. Outsiders were allowed to enter and benefit by it, but not so fast as to destroy the social equilibrium. Opportunity was thus given to those who were aliens to Indian culture to rise in the scale of life, but never so rapidly as to endanger the stability of the existing social order.

Castes mixed in marriage with comparative freedom; *anuloma* marriages were very common; the *pratiloma* marriages were by no means rare.

The Dharmashastras were not enforced at the point of the sword. Even the backward and the immigrant classes dropped their group-customs and usages, and cheerfully adopted the social system prescribed by them. Thus, Aryanisation of India was not achieved by the fiats of rulers or mass coercion by superior classes, but by the willing acceptance by all those who realised that the dynamics of the Dharmashastra provided, for the age, the best conditions for social, spiritual and cultural uplift.

Sanskrit, a living language, elastic in structure and rich in expression, possessing a rich, varied and beautiful literary achievement, was the living embodiment of the

Dharma and a powerful integrating force. Inscriptions began to be written in Sanskrit, even in the far South. A new thought or a new literary masterpiece in the language attracted the attention of all the intellectual centres. For instance the works of Kalidasa, a contemporary of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, became the models of literary beauty throughout the country within a few years of his death.

Under the Gupta Emperors, the *Mahabharata* acquired a unique position as an integrating psychological force. It immortalized the proud and joyous manhood of Bharatavarsha, and provided a common source of inspiration in courts, schools and in society as a whole.

The cultural uprising was based upon the central idea underlying *Dharma* from early time. It predicated an unalterable faith in human endeavour, self-restraint and self-discipline. Emphasis was laid on individual experience and becoming rather than on belief and the scriptural word; it was reached only when a man could shed his limitations and become divine in this life. Running through a diversity of religious beliefs and social outlook, it also laid an emphasis on the observance of the great vows of truth, non-stealing, continence and non-possession as essential steps in progress. All conduct, in order to be worthy of respect, had to be harmonised and regulated by ethical and spiritual values calculated to help the fulfilment of this ideal.

The four Gupta Emperors,—omitting, of course, the ignoble Ramagupta,—in maintaining the ideals of a *chakravarti,* made the state at one and the same time, powerful, stable, dynamic and happy. The age saw the speculative thought among others of Vasubandhu and the Nayanmars; the perfect lyric and drama of Kalidasa; the astronomical discoveries of Varahamihira; the beginnings of the structural temples; the beauty of the early Ajanta frescoes; the rise of Vaishnavism and Shaivism; the completion of the *Mahabharata* and the composition of *Vayu-* and the *Matsya-Puranas.* The empire was not merely based on conquests or administrative efficiency; its greatness lay in its integral outlook. Its strength was based as much on military strength as on internal order and economic plenty; the sap of its vitality was drawn from the roots of ancient tradition and race memory which they maintained, re-interpreted and replenished. The upsurge of the Kshatriya hierarchs of Madhyadesha and Magadha, loyally pledged to stability, constituted the steel-frame of the imperial structure. Nor was the splendour of the empire an isolated phenomenon surrounding the individuality of the rulers. The people, having discovered in their traditional way of life something noble and splendid, only saw it reflected in the greatness of their rulers. The Vakatakas and the Pallavas of the far south, the two other dominant powers in the country closely allied with the Guptas, joined in availing themselves of the agency of the Brahmanas, the missionaries and instruments of *Dharma*, by lavish generosity.

The Gupta Emperors became the symbols of a tremendous national upsurge. Life was never happier, our culture never more creative than during the Golden Prime of India.

V

About A.D. 455 the Hunas began to enter India. Emperor Skandagupta drove them back by a supreme effort. Twelve years later he died. A war of succession appears to have followed the death of Skandagupta weakening the empire in the hour of its danger. Five Gupta Emperors including Narasimhagupta Baladitya held precarious sway over parts of the empire between c. A.D. 500-570. Many parts of the empire became independent.

By A.D. 512, the Hunas under Toramana overran north India upto Eran in Madhya Pradesh. Toramana's son Mihirakula, a veritable terror, spread fire and carnage from the Punjab to Gwalior and by A.D. 525 became the master of a vast territory.

The Huna domination fortunately did not last long. There is no doubt that the power of Toramana was completely crushed and it may be true that having lost his kingdom he had to take refuge in Kashmir. The details of this struggle for liberation is unfortunately lost. We only know the name of three liberators: Emperor Narasimhagupta Baladitya, Yashodharman and Ishanavarman, the Maukhari king.

Yashodharman passed like a meteor without leaving any trace behind him, but Ishanavarman laid the foundation of the greatness of his dynasty—the Maukharis—and his capital, Kanauj.

The Golden Prime of India became a thing of the past; the military superiority of Magadha disappeared. Out of the welter emerged a new set of dynasties: the Maukharis of Kanauj, the Pushpabhutis of Thaneshvar, the Maitrakas of Valabhi and the Chalukyas of Badami. The Pallavas of Kanchi continued to flourish. In the west the Pratihara, head of a well-knit hierarchy, began to emerge from obscurity near Mt. Abu.

Soon the Maukharis also disappeared and Harshavardhana emerged as the most powerful king of north India.

VI

Due to the exaggerated eulogies of his biographer, Bana, and the enthusiastic Hiuen Tsang, Sri Harsha has been given more than his share of importance. No doubt he preserved the unity of Madhyadesha, but he suffered a serious defeat at the hands of Pulakeshin II of Badami and had to make terms with the Maitrakas of Valabhi. The territories he conquered were neither as extensive as the empire of Guptas who preceded him, nor that of the Pratiharas who followed him; nor did he leave behind an empire.

Sri Harsha, unlike the Guptas, was not able to release a new integrating impulse. The Emperor, with a large army had conquered far and wide, staged spectacular festivals, made generous gifts; his character stood high. But he left no hierarchs and no successors; on his death the fabric he had erected, fell to pieces. The causes which led to this sudden collapse of Kanauj may be found not only in the circumstances that brought him to supremacy, but also in his personal character.

The empire he had won simply disappeared. After Sri Harsha, his daughter's son, Dharasena IV, the ruler of the comparatively small kingdom of Valabhi, assumed the pretentious title of an Emperor. Within fifty years of Sri Harsha's death Yashovarman, a powerful ruler and the patron of Bhavabhuti, restored Kanauj to its glory—but for a while.

But the strength and vigour of India, between A.D. 550 and 750, was found in the south. While the Maukharis were founding an empire which had its seat at Kanauj, Pulakeshin II, of the Chalukya family (c. A.D. 550), had already founded a kingdom in the Bijapur district of Bombay with its capital at Vatapi, modern Badami. About the end of the sixth century, his son, Kirtivarman, embarked on wars against the kings who ruled to the north of Godavari.

Pulakeshin II, who had already subdued the Pallavas of Kanchi, repelled the invasion of Sri Harsha in c. A.D.

620. He annexed Vengi, modern Godavari district, and appointed his brother Vishnuvardhana as its governor on the east coast. Vishnuvardhana later became virtually independent and founded the dynasty of the Eastern Chalukyas. After a rule of about two centuries, during which the Chalukyas provided the greatest stabilising influence in the south, they were replaced by the Rashtrakutas.

The great Pallava king, Narasimhavarman I (c. A.D. 630-668) defeated even Pulakeshin II and captured his capital. Though the Chalukyas avenged this defeat soon after, the Pallavas remained the most powerful kings in the far south.

VII

Throughout the period of over four hundred years from A.D. 320 to 750, India was administered by well-organised governments. The political interest during this time is primarily confined to the history of northern India. This was due mostly to the power and extent of the Gupta Empire. But the contribution of the Chalukyas and the Pallava kings in stabilising the country and fostering the integrating forces should not be under-estimated.

The foundation of life, shaped during the Gupta period, remained unshaken in a large part of the country, though its pattern was changed.

The Puranas, some of which were redacted or newly written in the Gupta age, became the popular gospels of the new impulse. The Puranas were not merely texts, they revived the glory of the distant past, sanctified new places in the country weaving the unity of Bharatavarsha, and gave the old values a new vigour by re-interpreting them in the light of new conditions.

Shaivism an old cult became a vigorous integrating movement. The Gupta Emperors were Vaishnavas, but Shaivism was more popular, and Buddhism also had a large number of supporters. After A.D. 500 the Bhakti cult introduced into the religious movements the emotional element which dominated Indian life for centuries.

Sanskrit continued to be the vehicle for expression of thought, for the Sanskrit speaking world was one, all-Indian. Another factor in uniting the nation was the sacred literature, *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and the Puranas. The Pauranikas were the missionaries of the new age. The *Katha* became the most powerful educative and integrating force.

XV

THE AGE OF IMPERIAL KANAUJ

THE Age of Imperial Kanauj begins with the repulse of the Arab invasion of the mainland of India in the beginning of the eighth century and ends with the fateful year A.D. 1001 when Mahmud defeated Jaipal near Peshawar.

This Age saw the rise and fall of three great Empires in the country: of the Rashtrakutas, founded by Dantidurga (c. A.D. 733-757) and his successor, Krishna I (c. A.D. 757-773), which dominated the south till its collapse in the year A.D. 974; of the Palas in the East, its zenith under Dharmapala (c. A.D. 770-810), and its partial revival for a short period at the end of the tenth century; of the Pratiharas of the west and north, founded by Nagabhata I, which reached its zenith during the reigns of Mihira Bhoja (c. A.D. 836-885) and Mahendrapala (c. A.D. 885-908), decayed on account of the catastrophic blows dealt by the Rashtrakuta raids, but retained a shadowy imperial dignity to the end.

II

Kanauj or Kanyakubja, the imperial city of Ishanavarman, dominated Madhyadesha, the heartland of India. It was the coveted prize of the three imperial powers racing for all-India supremacy. Ultimately it passed into the hands of the Pratihara Gurjareshvaras about A.D. 815; remained the metropolis of power till A.D. 950, and continued to be the most influential centre of culture till A.D. 1018 when it was destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni.

By inheritance Kanauj was the home of Indo-Aryan traditions. In the post-Vedic ages the region from Hardwar to Unnao, near Lucknow, was known as Aryavarta, Later with the spread of Indo-Aryan culture, first, north India, and then the whole country, came to be called by that name. The original Aryavarta, then come to be known as Brahmavarta, with accretions, was called Madhyadesha during this age.

In the seventh century the kings of Bengal and Malava destroyed the power of Kanauj, then in the hands of the descendants of Ishanavarman. On the ruins of the Maukhari kingdom, Sri Harsha built his short-lived empire of Madhyadesha. During his forty-two years' rule (A.D. 606-647), Kanauj grew into the foremost city of India. Sri Harsha, however, could not create a hierarchy pledged to support his imperial structure. He left no able successor. His empire was dissolved soon after he died.

For more than half a century thereafter, the history of Kanauj is wrapt in obscurity. At the end of it, Yashovarman, a great conqueror and the patron of Bhavabhuti and Vakpati, is found ruling Kanauj. Both Yashovarman and Lalitaditya of Kashmir joined hands against the inroads of the Arabs and Tibetans. But the allies soon fell out and Lalitaditya destroyed the power of Yashovarman.

The Classical Age of India closed with the reign of Yashovarman. This Age opened with one Indrayudha on the throne of Kanauj, which had retained its metropolitan and symbolic importance as the capital of India. And the stage was set for the triangular struggle for it between the Rashtrakutas of the south, the Pratiharas of Gurjaradesha and the Palas of Bengal.

III

The first great conqueror to emerge on the scene, with the Age, was the Rashtrakuta Dantidurga. He was succeeded by his uncle Krishna I, the builder of Kailasa temple of Ellora. In a reign of fifteen years, he added to the empire what are the modern states of Hyderabad and Mysore.

About the same time, Gopala, elected to the position of a chieftain, consolidated Bengal. His son Dharmapala (c. A.D. 770-810) led his conquering army through the whole valley of Ganga; reduced the ruler of Kanauj to a puppet; held courts at Kanauj and Pataliputra. For long he commanded the allegiance of most of the kings of the north.

There was ferment also in the west. In A.D. 712 the Arabs conquered Sindh. About A.D. 725 Junaid, its governor, under the orders of Caliph Hasham of Baghdad, sent an army for the conquest of India. It overran Saurashtra, Bhillamala, the capital of Gurjara (the Abu region), and reached Ujjayini.

Then arose an unknown hero, Nagabhata by name; possibly he belonged to a branch of the royal Pratihara family of Bhillamala, the capital of Gurjaradesha. Nagabhata fought the invading army, flung it back, destroyed it.

During Nagabhata's time Dantidurga with his conquering army swept over the north, captured Ujjayini, where the Pratihara, his fortunes temporarily eclipsed, played the host to the conqueror.

Vatsaraja, the son of a nephew of Nagabhata I, styled "the pre-eminent among valiant Kshatriyas", waxed strong and entrenched himself in a strong position in north India. He, however, suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of

Rashtrakuta Dhruva and had to take refuge in some inaccessible region.

Undaunted by reverses, the next ruler, Nagabhata II, consolidated the territory which comprised Marwad, Malava and modern North Gujarat. Having secured a base, he entered the race for all-India supremacy with the Pala kings of Bengal and the Rashtrakutas of the south.

Dharmapala marched on Kanauj, removed Indrayudha from its throne and installed Chakrayudha. Nagabhata II in his turn, marched against Chakrayudha, overthrew him and made Kanauj his capital. Soon after Rashtrakuta Govinda III invaded Kanauj and inflicted a defeat on Nagabhata which, however, did not cripple his strength. Ultimately Kanauj passed into the hands of the Pratiharas. About A.D. 815 it became the capital of the Pratihara empire.

In *c.* A.D. 834 Nagabhata II died.Ramabhadra, his son and successor, was in his turn, succeeded in *c.* A.D. 836 by Mihira Bhoja.

When he came to the throne, Mihira Bhoja, then a youth, was faced with a grave situation. Under the feeble rule of his father Ramabhadra, the power and prestige of the empire had suffered. Its outlying parts had become independent. Even Gurjaradesha the homeland was in open revolt. The imperial possessions extended no further than Kanauj and a small area surrounding it. Only a few of his fathers' feudatories stood loyal to the new ruler.

The first act of the young ruler was to restore his authority over his homeland, raise the morale of the allied clans of Gurjaradesha, and make them into a compact and invulnerable hierarchy. He did this with such success that the tenacity and vigour of the hierarchic dynasties survived more than a thousand years after the fall of the empire. Many of the Rajput rulers who surrendered power in the great integration of A.D. 1947-48 were descendants of the feudatories and generals of Mihira Bhoja.

The career of Mihira Bhoja, pieced together from stray references by modern scholars, was a great factor in making Kanauj a radiating centre of political and cultural activities which made for the integration of life.

Sometime after A.D. 836, Mihira Bhoja conquered Sarasvata-*mandala* in the Nepal Terai. By A.D. 876 he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Pala king Narayanapala and annexed part of the Pala kingdom, particularly Bihar, within his dominion. The Rashtrakutas were now engaged elsewhere, so Bhoja pressed towards the west till he conquered practically the whole of modern Gujarat. The expansion of the power of the Arabs of Sind had been checked earlier. This period saw their power reduced to insignificance. It is almost certain, that this was due to Mihira Bhoja. The Muslim travellers however, have left accounts of the greatness of the Gurjara kings particularly Bhoja (Baura).

Bhoja probably died in A.D. 888. At the time of his death, the banner of the Ikshvaku Gurjareshvaras flew over an empire larger than that of Sri Harsha, if not that of the Guptas. This empire rested on the strength of regularly paid standing armies, the loyalty of the hierarchs and the support of popular enthusiasm.

IV

The Age of Imperial Kanauj saw a vast religious and cultural resurgence in the country, of which the Puranas were the gospels. It harmonised the beliefs and practices of most of the cults which accepted it as the final source. The temple architecture, which began with the majestic Kailasa of Ellora and developed into the exquisite beauty of Chandella Dhanga's Shiva temple at Khajuraho, was its symbol. The cult of *tirthas* as a fundamental institution of religio-social significance strengthened the unity of India, carrying forward the consciousness that Aryavarta was the inviolate land of *Dharma*. The sweeping movement of the spirit was led by Shankaracharya, the prophet of the Age and the intellectual architect of ages to come.

It was an age of catholicity. The different creeds joined hands to respect each other. The gods of differing cults were all worshipped; Shiva was worshipped with his whole family, and so were the Trimurtis, the Panchayatana and the Matrikas. The kings generally patronised all religions and different rulers of the same dynasty are known to belong to different religious persuasions. Even the Arab traders were found happily settled in some parts of the country.

Though the Pala kings were its great patrons, Buddhism was on the decline since the days of Harshavardhana. Its disappearance form India during this period was hastened by the growing unpopularity of the Tantrik practices which it had adopted, by the Puranic pantheon accepting Buddha as an avatara of Vishnu and adopting several of its practices and beliefs, and above all, by the evangelical triumphs of Shankaracharya.

The Pratihara Emperors formed the spearhead of this religio-cultural upsurge. Some of them, like Mihira Bhoja, worshipped Bhagavati as their guardian deity; others Vishnu and Shiva. They were of the people and did not stand away from their hopes, aspirations and traditions. Like the Gupta Emperors, they received the full co-operation of the Brahmanas, who, through their intellectual achievements and religious and social influence, could maintain a sense of identity between the dominant minorities and the people.

V

The Puranic Renaissance gave added sanctity to the Dharmashastras. In this Age, learning tended more and more to live on the past, the commentators and the writers of digests took the place of the law-givers. Of them, the most outstanding was Medhatithi, who wrote a commentary of the *Manu-smriti*.

The spirit of the Age found expression in relating *Varnashrama-dharma*, which was dynamic, to the virile concept of Aryavarta. Aryavarta, says Medhatithi, is not limited to geographical boundaries; it is not confined to the four corners of India; it is so called because the *Mlechchhas*, though they frequently invade the country, are not able to abide in it. No sanctity attaches to Brahmavarta as such; it would be *Mlechchhadesha* if the *Mlechchhas* subjugated it and lived there. Impurity does not attach to the land, but to the people. *Varnashrama-dharma* is a dynamic and expansive social organisation to be maintained and spread. Aryavarta extended wherever the *dharma* is enforced and maintained.

This concept did not remain a mere theory; it was in active operation. The culture having come to dominate India was on a march to wider expansion. Indians crossed the frontiers and established kingdoms, carrying religious, literary and cultural traditions with them to far off lands. In this way came into existence the Shailendra Empire in Java, Sumatra and Malay Peninsula (*c.* A.D. 778-13th century); the dynasty of Panduranga (*c.* A.D. 757-860) and Bhrigu dynasty (*c.* A.D. 860-895) in Champa, the dynasties of Jayavarman II (A.D. 802-877) and Indravarman (*c.* A.D. 877-1001) in Kambuja, the dynasty of Sanjaya (*c.* A.D. 732-928) in Central Java, and the dynasty of Sindok (*c.* A.D. 929-1007) in Eastern Java.

This dynamic outlook was followed in actual practice in India as would appear from the Arab chroniclers and the *Devala-smriti.* Even though converted to Islam, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, who had been forced to do forbidden or unclean things, could be reclaimed by purification. A woman carried away by the *Mlechchhas* could become pure by isolation and abstention from food for three nights.

A king, says Medhatithi, has responsibility to maintain *dharma* in the land. He is under a paramount duty to resist foreign invasion at all cost. There can be no compromise with the invader: if his realm is invaded and its people massacred, the king must die fighting.

The king owes his position to no divine sanction but to the wishes of the people. He is only an instrument of maintaining *danda* or sovereignty which is based on the fundamental law propounded by the Dharmashastras. This law is above the king and is inalienable; nor would custom be permitted to override it. The king must submit to the ordinances of the *Smritis.* At the same time Dharmashastras are not to be rigidly interpreted. Equity is an equal authority with the Vedas, *Smritis* and *achara* for determining the right principle of law. ''Satisfaction of the learned and the virtuous,'' says Medhatithi, ''is a vital test; it may find what appears to be *dharma* as *adharma* and what appears *adharma* as *dharma.* When those learned in the Vedas feel that a thing is pure, it is to be deemed as pure.''

VI

Varnashrama-dharma of Medhatithi is a dynamic world force and not a static social order. A Brahmana can marry the daughter of a Kshatriya or a Vaishya. An adopted son may be of a caste other than the father's; a

Brahmana can adopt even a Kshatriya boy. A Kshatriya and a Vaishya have the right to recite the Gayatrimantra. Brahmanahood is not acquired by birth alone.

A Shudra has the right to offer oblations to the fire, or to perform religious sacrifices, except the Vaivahika fire at marriage. He may not be competent to pronounce judgment according to the *Smritis,* but he can be one of the *sabhyas* in a court of justice. If any *Smriti,* says Medhatithi, takes away the right of a Shudra or lays down any prohibition, the injunction should be very strictly interpreted, and its scope is not to be enlarged by inferences from other texts. Those *Smritis,* which are in favour of the Shudras, should, therefore, he enforced. But these dicta are more in the nature of a protest against the growing rigidity of the social order and cannot be read as reflecting universal practice.

Medhatithi accords to women a position in refreshing contrast to some of the later authorities who wrote for the succeeding Era of Resistance. Women can perform all *samskaras;* only they should not recite Vedic mantras. At a partition an unmarried sister should be given one-fourth share of the dividing brothers.

A wife is obtained from God, not secured like cattle or gold in the market; a husband, therefore, has no ownership over his wife. Before the wife could be compelled by the husband to serve him, he must have the necessary qualifications, among others, a loving attitude towards her. Medhatithi condemns the dictum of Manu that one is to protect oneself even at the cost of one's wife; even princes should not forsake their wives, says he. The practice of *Sati,* according to Medhatithi, is nothing but suicide, and as such, it is not permissible.

The position which the women occupied during this age, is also evidenced by other contemporary sources. The general level of their culture was high. Shilamahadevi, wife of the Rashtrakuta Emperor, Dhruva, enjoyed the privilege of granting large gifts without her husband's consent. Several queens of the Kara dynasty ruled in Orissa. Sugandha and Didda of Kashmir administered extensive kingdoms as dowager queens. There were learned women as well as women administrators. Avantisundari, the wife of the poet Rajashekhara, was an exceptionally accomplished woman. The poet quotes her thrice in the *Kavyamimamsa.* His *Karpuramanjari* was produced at her request and Hemachandra quotes three of her Prakrit stanzas. Ubhayabharati or Sarasvati, wife of Mandanamishra, who acted as an arbitrator in her husband's disputations with Shankaracharya, was a learned scholar herself.

We have a glimpse of social conditions of imperial Kanauj in the works of Rajashekhara, an ardent lover of Kanauj. Its women did not lag behind men in point of education. According to the poet, there were several poetesses in Kanauj. ''Culture is connected with the soul and not with the sex'' says the poet. The poet had met princesses and poetesses, daughters of prime ministers, courtesans and wives of court jesters who were well versed in science.

VII

In the field of literature this Age cannot be compared with the Classical Age with its old masters like Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. Under the influence of the rhetoricians external features of literature rather than literary beauty came into fashion; scholarship replaced poetic fancy; Sanskrit acquired a learned character.

Even kings, as we find from some notable instances, were highly educated; several of them were accomplished poets. Most of them were patrons of learning as well as authors. All branches of literature were assiduously cultivated.

There were *kavyas* in plenty; epics, romances and *champus* were composed in large numbes. Lexicography was cultivated; so were grammar, poetics, metrics and rhetorics. Anandavardhana wrote his famous *Dhvanyaloka,* propounding his famous theory of *Dhvani.* The favourite literary form of the Age was the drama though only one classical specimen survives in Vishakhadatta's *Mudrarakshasa.*

Literary activity in Sanskrit abounded even in the south. *Rigarthadipika* by Venkata Madhava, in the reign of Chola king Parantaka I, is one of the earliest of its kind in Sanskrit literature. Shaktibhadra contributed the drama *Ashcharyachudamani,* the first Sanskrit drama to be composed in the south, known so far.

Literature was also cultivated in Prakrit, Haribhadra being the greatest master of the period. There was a vast non-canonical literature in Pali and in Apabhramsha in which the works of several eminent Jain writers like Dhanapala, Pushpadanta, Kanakamara, Padmakirti and Svayambhu have survived. During this period, several works of great value were composed in Kannada and Tamil, forming landmarks in the development of these languages.

Philosophic literature was widely cultivated by the Bauddhas, the Jainas and the Brahmanas. Of them all, Shankaracharya was the greatest. He provided a philosophic theory which undermined the barren ritualism of the Mimamsakas as well as the decadent Mahayana Buddhism and Jainism. He stood for monism; preached the superiority of *sannyasa* over ritualism. He purged many religious beliefs of their grossness. He was also a practical reformer. His organizational work, which brought cults, practices and rituals under the direction of the four great

Mathas which he founded and which stood for his Vedantic monism, restored the cultural unity of the land. He also reorganized the monastic orders and infused a nobler sense of mission in them.

The *Bhagavata-Purana* was the culminating point of the strong theistic movement started by the Alvars and Nayanmars in the south. It became the gospel of *bhakti,* the intense devotional ecstasy of the Alvars as well as the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita.* Its deep emotion and creative beauty saved the soul of India during the following Era of Resistance.

The last literary phase of the Age is represented by Rajashekhara, who lived in the reign of Mihira Bhoja, for he was the court poet and teacher of Mahendrapala and Mahipala. Rajashekhara's works give us a vivid glimpse of himself and the time. The poet was born in the family of Yayavaras, a family of poets. Though a Brahmana, he married into a Chahamana family and his wife, Avantisundari, was therefore a Kshatriya.

Rajashekhara had a partiality for Lata (South Gujarat). According to him, it was the "crest of the earth". Its people, however, hated Sanskrit, but spoke elegant Prakrit in a beautiful way. Its women were noted for their beauty and elegance of speech. Its poets possessed distinctive literary traits; and favoured the style called 'Lati'. Humour was its speciality.

The people of the region enclosed by the Ganga and the Yamuna, the centre of which was Kanauj, according to the poet, were the ornaments of the land. They liked new and elegant literary works. The composition of its poets was well constructed and their recitation was sweet like honey. To him the city was the centre of the universe; a sacred place; the home of the imperial Ikshvakus; a centre from where radiated power, fashion and culture.

The whole country, in this period, had a unit of culture. Sanskrit was the language of the cultured, spoken and understood among the educated throughout the country, but was most prevalent to the east of Banaras.

VIII

Mihira Bhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala, a fearless military genius, who extended the empire of Mihira Bhoja adding to it the Karnal district in the Punjab, the Nepalese terai and the Rajshahi district of Bengal. In *c.* A.D. 910 he was succeeded by Mahipala who also, like his father, was educated by the poet Rajashekhara.

Within a few years of Mahipala's coming to the throne of Kanauj, however, Indra III, the Rashtrakuta Emperor, marched to the north and occupied Kanauj. But he suddenly died, possibly in battle, and his army withdrew precipitately to the south. In A.D. 940, Krishna III reappeared in the north, overran Malava and Gurjaradesha, occupied Kalanjara and gave a shattering blow to the Pratihara empire.

The two raids of the Rashtrakutas had unfortunate results for the whole of India. Madhyadesha lay mauled and bleeding. The empire of the south tottered to a fall. The feudatories of both declared independence one after the other. The country was prostrate and defenceless, and the Aryavarta Consciousness was submerged by parochial sovereignties.

Out of the chaos, two powerful feudatories carved out independent kingdoms: the Paramaras of Malava and the Chandellas of Jejakabhukti. Kanauj, however, continued to remain the metropolis of culture, but its Emperor was no more than a shadow of his former self.

By about A.D. 974 the Empire of the Rashtrakutas was taken over by the Chalukya king, Taila II, a feudatory. A bitter and long drawn out war ensued between Taila II and Paramara Munja of Malava. Ultimately, Munja was captured and killed between A.D. 995 and 997. Taila followed him soon after in about A.D. 997.

In the fateful year A.D. 997 Abu-l-Qasim Mahmud, son of Sabuktigin, captured Ghazni, developed a marvellous striking power and turned his attention to India.

Ancient India ended. Medieval India began.

XVI

SOUTH INDIA

THE Satavahanas held authority for about three centuries from 37 B.C. to 218 A.D. and this period is of supreme importance in the growth of the Neo-Aryan civilization in the south.

One remarkable feature relating to this dynasty is the maternal names by which the kings are known, Gautamiputra Satakarni, Satakarni, the son of Gautami; Vasishthiputra, Pulumayi, Pulumayi the son of Vasishthi; Gautamiputra Sriyajna Satakarni, etc. The same unusual custom will be noticed among some of the matriarchal kings of the far-eastern colonies also.

Placed strategically in the large area which geographically was the laboratory of relations between the Aryan civilization of the north and the historic Dravidian civilization of the south, the Pratishthana Empire during the three hundred years of its existence can claim to have fulfilled its historical mission of establishing the cultural unity of India. The Mauryan conquest of the south was an extension of northern authority which no doubt was accompanied by a penetration of northern culture and ideas. But the Mauryan hold weakened after Ashoka and the influence of the imperial government was too short-lived to have brought the north and the south together in ideas. This was the historic mission of the Satavahanas and the geograpical position of the Empire, placed as it was in the centre of India, enabled them to fulfil it with success. The south India we see in the fourth century has been Aryanised in thought and ideas. The Pallava power at Kanchi is Sanskritic in its civilization and even the Pandyas and Cheras have come fully into the composite structure of Hindu civilization. The credit for this great transformation belongs to the Satavahanas.

Pratishthana their capital was one of the great centres of civilization at the time, an imperial city whose glory is fully reflected in literature. It is the Paithan of Ptolemy, the capital of Sri Polemaios (Pulumayi). The great Gunadhya, the author of *Brihatkatha,* lived here and the story of the rivalry between Sanskrit and Paishachi (the dialect of the Barbarians) on which the story of *Brihatkatha* is itself based is a clear indication of the fight that was then taking place for the predominance of Sanskrit as the vehicle of civilization and culture.

Under the Satavahanas Hinduism and Buddhism seem to have flourished equally. ''In the first centuries of our era,'' says Grousset, ''when northern India was being subjected in art as well as in politics to the domination of foreign peoples, —Greeks and Scythians,—Andhra has preserved inviolate as well as its political independence the tradition of Indian aesthetics.'' Amaravati, Goli, Nagarjunikonda had from the second to the fourth century A.D. become covered with stupas of which the sculpture serves as a link between the primitive Buddhist art of Sanchi and the Gupta workshops of the fourth to the seventh centuries. Religious establishments, temples, monasteries and *dharmashalas* were built all over the country both by royal bounty and by the munificence of private donors. The foreman of the artisans of Sri Satakarni is recorded in an inscription in Bhilsa topes as having made a grant. In the Nasik inscription which records the dedication of a great Buddhist cave monastery excavated at his own expense Ushavadata the donor speaks of his numerous charities to Brahmins also. Ushavadata, the pious Buddhist merchant also fed a hundred thousand Brahmins. Gautamiputra Satakarni who declares himself to be the sole protector of the Brahmins records a benefaction for the Buddhists.

The Satavahanas were great excavators of cave temples and the magnificent temples of Ellora and Ajanta were the continuation of the Satavahana tradition to which all middle Indian dynasties in succeeding ages claimed historic relationship. The basic tradition in middle India is the Satavahana Empire, as in the north it is the Mauryan. From the point of view of historic continuity it is important to remember this primary fact, as up to quite recent times, the traditions flowing from the Satavahanas were living factors in Indian history, as we shall try to show.

The Satavahana Empire extended from sea to sea and virtually comprised the whole of south India excluding the Trairajya or the Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdoms in the extremity and in the north it included Bhilsa and a great portion of central India. Orissa was included in the direct domains of the Empire. Naturally with so vast a coast-line including many of the more important ports, trade and commerce flourished greatly within the Empire. Kalyan was the most important trade centre and we have the names of numerous merchant princes belonging to that place inscribed in the caves Kanheri and Junnar as having made generous contributions of a philanthropic nature. The extent of individual fortunes of the great merchants of this time may be judged from the fact that the Great Karli caves were excavated at the expense of a single pious Seth of Vaijayanti—a commercial town of great importance near the present Portuguese territory of Goa.

Another notable fact relating to the conditions within the Satavahana Empire was the facility of communications between its different parts. The grants made and recorded in many of the important places are by merchants living in distant parts of the Empire. Commerce which these monarchs specially encouraged and the influence which the great capitalist class of merchants undoubtedly exercised, involved the organisation of easy and peaceful communications, a tradition which a national system of pilgrimages which seem to have come into existence from the earliest times must have greatly strengthened. It was the emergence of Vakataka power in the Vindhya area somewhere about the middle of the third century that brought about the downfall of the Satavahanas. But an Empire so firmly established in its home domains does not break down with the fall of a dynasty. The Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas in the Godavari valley and the Pallavas in the south, originally the viceroys of the Satavahanas, claimed succession to the Empire within their own territorial limits as the Vakatakas claimed it to the north of the Vindhyas. The Gangas and the Kadambas were also the inheritors of the tradition and as the Vijayanagar Emperors claimed in time to be Chalukya Chudamanis, or the crest-jewels of the Chalukya dynasty, and as the great kings of Gujarat equally claimed succession from the Chalukyas the imperial tradition of the Satavahanas may be said to have been carried forward at least to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The rise of the great dynasty of the Pallavas of Kanchi is shrouded in obscurity. A similarity of names led earlier historians to the hasty conclusion that the Pallavas and the Pahlavas were racially related. This is but another example of the tendency of European historians to believe that anything good in India must have had a foreign origin. Dr. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, the doyen of Indian historians, after a careful and searching examination of evidence states:

> "We do not meet with the form Pahlava in connection with the Pallavas of Kanchi in any record of their time.... The word as applied to Pallavas in the first instance seems to be a translation of the Tamil word Tondaiyar and Tondaman and this finds confirmation in some of the copperplate charters which do bring in tender twigs of some kind in connection with the eponymous name Pallava. This undoubtedly is a later use of the term but gives the indication that even at that comparatively late period the traditional notion was that they were not foreigners such as the Pahlavas would have been. In all the material that has been examined there is nothing to indicate either the migration of a people or even of a family that might have ultimately raised itself into a dynasty from the northwest, so that the assumption of a connection between the one set of people and the other rests upon the mere doubtful ground of a possibility whereas the translation or adaptation of a southern word into Sanskrit is very much more than a possibility as indeed a word like Dravida or Dramida would clearly indicate."

We have in fact in Rajashekhara the distinction between Pahlava and Pallava clearly made and emphasised.

The Pallavas seem to have been the governors of the Satavahanas on the southern marches. With the breakup of the Pratishthana Empire they assumed their independence and when Samudra Gupta marched to the south they were well established in Kanchi, the ancient capital of Tondamandalam and of the great dynasty of Cholas. Vishnu Gopa mentioned in Harishena's inscription as having been conquered by Samudragupta was a Pallava king. But the greatness of the Pallavas was still to come, as the Cholas, though driven out of their capital, were still powerful and the Pandyas had maintained their independence and authority even against the Satavahanas.

An equally important succession State to the Satavahanas were the Chalukyas, the great bearers of the imperial tradition in north Deccan. The Chalukyas though claiming descent from the Solar dynasty were a local family which rose to power gradually and established themselves after a continuous period of fight with the Rashtrakutas who seem to have become the rulers of this territory during the declining years of Satavahanas. In any case the inscriptions definitely establish the fact that Jayasimha, the first important Chalukya king, defeated Indra the son of Krishna of the Rashtrakuta family, and founded his dynasty.

Between them, the Pallavas and the Chalukyas dominated south Indian history for over a period of three hundred years.

The redaction of the texts which may be said to have ended in the Gupta period and its great importance to national development have already been alluded to. From the point of view of religion the movement was even more significant. The re-written Puranas and the *Mahabharata* provided the people of India with a mythology, a corpus of unexampled heroic poetry, a rich system of popular ethics and a religious literature for the masses, catholic enough to include the worship of all creeds inside Hinduism. In fact by the sixth century Buddha himself had been included among the *avataras* of Vishnu and proclaimed an orthodox god entitled to worship by Hindus. The *Matsya-Purana* includes Buddha among the *avataras* and the passage is quoted by early writers. In the *Bhagavata-*

Purana also Buddha is mentioned as an *avatara* of Vishnu and *Brahmanda* prescribes a festival for the anniversary of Buddha where it is declared that the image of Buddha should be worshipped in a particular manner on that day. Even in south India from an inscription of seventh century we know that Buddha was counted as an *avatara.*

In fact one of the great contributions of the Gupta religious revival is this emphasis on the doctrine of *avataras.* The theory of *avataras* goes back to pre-Buddhist times. Some of the *avataras* were known and worshipped as such in time of Panini, but it is in Patanjali (*c.* 150 B.C.) that we have a definite allusion to Krishna being an *avatara* of God and not merely a deified human being. The doctrine of *avatara* is simple enough and is stated with the greatest clarity in the *Gita* itself. ''When religion declines and evil-doers are to be destroyed, I shall be born, at different periods'' says Krishna. According to the now universally accepted doctrine of the Hindus, whenever the state of human society requires to be regenerated, divinely inspired men are born for the purpose. They are *avataras* but only men with such part of divine power as is required for the purpose in hand. Vishnu as the protector is the God of *avataras* and of his incarnations only Krishna is identified with him, while his other human forms like Rama Dasharathi, Bhargava Rama and Balarama though entitled to worship are not equated with God himself.

The doctrine of incarnation was interpreted elastically from the very beginning. Thus the Puranas include such Rishis as Kapila, Dattatreya, and Vyasa as *avataras* of Vishnu; also others who have worked for the re-establishment of *Dharma* are often locally elevated to semi-divine dignity on the same score. The *avatara* doctrine had also advantage of providing the worshipper with personal gods, without his having in any way to break with the general body of Hindu thought which emphasised the impersonal aspect of Godhead and insisted on the doctrine of *Neti* (not like this). The unknowable *nirguna* God becomes knowable when It takes human forms and the compromise between the rigidity of Hindu philosophic thought and the popular demand for devotion to personal gods was easily effected by the doctrine of *avataras*.

If the Puranic and *Mahabharata* redactions provided Hinduism with a magnificent religious literature for the common people, it also brought to prominence a sacred text, the *Bhagavad Gita,* which was soon to become the scripture par excellence of the intelligentsia. The *Gita* is embedded as a dialogue in the first battle *parva* of the *Mahabharata* and is an essential part of the great epic. Even Rudolf Otto, who set out to find the "original *Gita*", comes to the conclusion that "the *Gita* in its entirety was not dovetailed into the epic at some late period: rather was the original *Gita* a genuine constituent of the epic when it became Krishnaized. ....The remainder of the material....consists of individual dotrinal treatises". The *Gita* with the doctrinal treatises which is the *Upanishad* is what matters from the religious point of view and this is the great book which comes to prominence as a scripture of *Bhakti,* Action and Knowledge in the fifth century.

The importance of *Gita* in the doctrinal reorganisation of Hinduism cannot be overestimated. There it was in a single compendious book which could be learnt by heart, the entire doctrine of the great *Upanishads* discussed and stated in the clearest terms. Since its formation there is no book which has exercised so great an effect on Hindu thought, which is proved by the fact that the great Shankara commented upon it in the eighth century as an authoritative text to establish his doctrine of Advaita and others who followed him had equally to depend on the authority of the *Gita* to prove their doctrines. By the time of al-Beruni the authority of the *Gita* was pre-eminent, for the Muslim author not only quotes the text at different places but places his reliance mainly on Krishna's sayings when he discourses on the Hindu view of God. The importance of the *Gita* through ages can be judged from the numerous commentaries produced in every part of India and what is equally significant, is the voluminous literature that is published annually in India as modern interpretation of the text.

The reorganisation of Hinduism was on a popular basis. But the Brahmanical mind which was ritualistic in regard to religion elaborated at the same time the great doctrines of Mimamsa. The Sutras of Sabara and Jaimini's commentaries on them are no doubt anterior to the Gupta redactions but the popularity of the system as a school of religious thought dates only with Prabhakara at the end of the sixth century. Kumarila who probably belongs to the seventh century was the other great figure of his school. As a system of philosophy Mimamsa, both according to Prabhakara and Kumarila, deals more with the technique of thought, than with thought itself. It is the unique case of a system interested in the method of ascertaining validity and the rules of interpretation without attempting to search for ultimate knowledge. As a religion it is only concerned with rituals. The Mimamsaka lives in a world of self-revealed Vedas, and he is concerned only with the correct performance of the rites as laid down. This is the reason why Jaimini was himself attacked as an atheist, an accusation against which defence only leads us to the conclusion that God does not matter as the results of Vedic rites correctly performed are automatic and not dependent on any Divine will.

The Mimamsa doctrine which under its exponents

Prabhakara and Kumarila gained great ascendancy among thinkers of Hinduism in the seventh and eighth centuries was in fact a protest against the Puranic religion of the people and was opposed both to Buddhist and Upanishadic thought. It excluded not only a personal deity to be realised either through *Bhakti* or through *Yoga,* but also fundamentally clashed with teachings of Buddha. It was Shankara—the protagonist of Advaita—who prevented this barren ritualism from becoming a national religion and provided Hinduism with a corpus of philosophic doctrines, which has endured so long against the attacks of Islam and Christianity.

Shankara is generally placed in the eighth century. Born of a Nambudri family on the west coast of south India at Kaladi in the present State of Travancore, Shankara came to northern India after his education and propounded in different places his doctrine of Advaita Vedanta which he traced to ancient Upanishadic teachings, especially to Badarayana's *Brahma-sutra.* He buttressed his views further by a commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita,* extracting from its teachings the essence of his Advaita. Armed with a philosophy which claimed to be in the true tradition of Upanishadic teaching and a body of religious beliefs which gave a higher vision of religious reality, Shankara met the scholastic teachers of the age, both the doctors of Mimamsa and the Acharyas of Buddhism. His contest with Mandana Mishra, who was the leading exponent of the school of ritualism is famous in Indian tradition. The accusation hurled against Shankara by the Mimamsakas was that he was a concealed Buddhist. This is undoubtedly true to the extent that like the Buddhists he was opposed to the system of mechanical rituals which claiming Vedic authority usurped the position of religion. Equally he was considered the strongest opponent of their creed by the Buddhists and the decline of Buddhist philosophical schools in India is attributed rightly to his influence.

It is appropriate that the great movement which provided Hinduism with a catholic philosophy and a conception of God which was acceptable to the highest thought of every sect should have had its origin in south India. From very early periods, powerful theistic schools following Shiva and Vishnu, both philosophical and devotional, existed in south India. Tamil Shaivism especially was a theological doctrine of great importance. The literature of this school assumed great spiritual authority between the third and the seventh century A.D. The *Tiruvachakam,* or the holy writ of Manikkavachakar, may be considered the most characteristic classic of the Tamil Shaivites and its importance to Indian religion has not been fully recognised. While it is undoubtedly devotional, its philosophic forms have close affinity with the orthodox doctrines of Hindu philosophy.

The Vaishnava movement of the Alvar saints which is contemporaneous was also devotional. The *Nalayiram* or the "Four thousand" which contains the hymns of the saints is accepted as a canonical scripture by the Tamil Vaishnavites. In fact the period immediately preceding the arrival of Shankara on the scene was one of notable spiritual and philosophical activity in the south. It is obvious that Shankara's thought was greatly influenced by his upbringing in the south. His own devotional hymns in Sanskrit, addressed to Shiva, Vishnu and Devi, which are still the most popular of all the devotional literature in Sanskrit, clearly indicate that the Philosopher of the Absolute also recognised the great value of devotion and religion.

Shankara was not merely a philosophical thinker reconciling a bold and original system with the doctrines and traditions of the past, thereby providing Hinduism with a philosophical background, but also a practical reformer. He purged the worship of the Devi of objectionable features which had crept into it from the practices of the Tantriks. The Samayachara form of worship of the goddess claims Shankara as its originator and undoubtedly the most famous hymn of this form of worship, the *Saundarya Lahari* or "the waves of beauty" is his composition. It may however be added that the followers of left-handed *marga* of the worship of Devi also claim *Saundarya Lahari* as their text and are able to find interpretations suitable to their creed in it.

The main organisational work that Shankara undertook was the establishment of the four great Mathas, at Badari in the north, high up in the Himalayas, at Puri in the east, at Dwarka on the west coast, off Jamnagar and at Sringeri in the south. These pontifical seats were to be occupied by Shankaracharyas, who were to maintain unpolluted the teaching of Advaita and to maintain the ascendancy of Upanishadic thought. It is undeniable that these great monasteries together with their subsidiary institutions, also under religious teachers sometimes assuming the title of Shankaracharya, have helped to maintain the orthodoxy of Shankara's teachings and the hold of Hinduism on the people.

Connected with the establishment of these pontifical seats is the reorganisation of the monastic orders which is also associated with Shankara's name. The Dashanami Sannyasis claim their spiritual descent from him. A body of trained missionaries who would carry far and wide the teachings of the Master was necessary if the movement initiated by Shankara was to succeed. India always had its wandering religious teachers, but apart from the monks of Buddhism and Jainism, these Sannyasis do not seem in earlier times to have been attached to any monastic order. They were the disciples of individual Gurus. Shankara organised them into a regular body, and it is permissible to argue that the wide acceptance of his creed all over India was in a measure due to this reform.

The doctrines of the new school were popularised by the very large number of temple colleges which came into existence at this time about which allusion has already been made. These colleges which gave free higher education on a large scale were predominantly religious and from inscriptional evidence it is clear that Buddhist thought was rigidly excluded from them. While in Nalanda and other Buddhist universities Hindu systems were freely studied and discussed, in the temple colleges of the Hindus a more narrow view was upheld and the curricula made no provision for the understanding of the doctrines which had for so long a time held sway in India. In the reorganisation of Hinduism these colleges played a great part.

The "disappearance" of Buddhism from the Indian scene is one of the facts of Indian history which have puzzled European thinkers. It is an undoubted fact that by the ninth century Buddhism had ceased to be a vital religion in India. No doubt in isolated centres like Nalanda it existed as philosophical schools up to a much later time, but actually as a religion of the people it disappeared by the beginning of the ninth century. The movement had in fact started much earlier for early in the seventh century Hiuen-Tsang had noted its decay in many important centres. But its virtual disappearance after having so profoundly influenced Indian thought for over thirteen centuries requires explanation. The reason is that gradually Buddhism and Hinduism became indistinguishable. Those who accused Shankara of being *Prachchhanna Bauddha* or a concealed Buddhist were in a measure right. Not only did the philosophical concepts of the Madhyamika school find echoes in Advaita, but Shankara by his fight against the Mimamsakas broke down the barriers between the Buddhist laity and Hinduism. Buddhist temples like the famous Jagannath temple of Puri became Hindu temples and with the laity accepting Hinduism recruitment to the monasteries became more and more difficult. As Eliot, the historian of Buddhism, says: "The line dividing Buddhist laymen from ordinary Hindus became less and less marked, distinctive teaching was found only in the monasteries: these became poorly recruited. . . . Even in the monasteries the doctrine taught bore a closer resemblance to Hinduism than the preaching of Gotama and it is the absence of the protestant spirit, this pliant adaptability to the ideas of each age which caused Indian Buddhism to lose its individuality and separate existence".

In short it may be said that by the end of the tenth century Hinduism had asserted its universal supremacy in India, reorganised its popular doctrines, provided itself with a higher philosophy which found general acceptance among the intellectual classes and absorbed into its fold the religion of Buddha. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin, the worship of Shiva, Vishnu and Devi prevailed and the background of philosophy accepted without question the main doctrines of Paramatma, Jivatma, Maya and re-incarnation in a society organised on the basis of caste and the Dharmashastras.

XVII

THE SULTANATE OF DELHI

THE fairly extensive though local settlements[1] by Muslim traders in the coastal areas of Peninsular India from the eighth to the thirteenth century, and the conquest of Sindh[2] by the Arabs under Muhammad bin Qasim in the early years of the eighth century, while they reacted on the political, socio-economic and religious conditions in the areas concerned, did not have any material influence on the life of the people in the vast sub-continent as a whole.[3] Similarly the repeated invasions of the Ghaznavids, Subuktagin and Mahmud, while they impoverished and devastated the invaded areas, resulted in the massacre of large numbers of inhabitants and carrying away of vast numbers of slaves and craftsmen to Ghazni, left no material heritage in the social, cultural or political fields. One far-reaching result of these invasions, however, was the annexation of the greater part of the Punjab with the Ghaznavid Empire.

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[1] For a detailed account of these settlements based on original sources see Tara Chand—*Influence of Islam on Indian Culture,* pp. 28-43 (Allahabad, 1946).

[2] See *Cambridge History of India,* III, pp. 1-10 (Cambridge, 1928) and Ishwari Prasad—*History of Mediaeval India,* pp. 55-70 (Allahabad, 1948).

[3] Wolseley Haig in the *Cambridge History of India,* cited above, states that the Arabs "seem to have left the administration largely in the hand of the natives and to have tolerated freely the Hindu religion" (p. 10), while Abdul Qadir in his chapter, "*The Cultural Influence of Islam*" (The Legacy of India, edited by G. T. Garratt, Oxford, 1951) remarks "The Arabs, who conquered Sind and remained there, have left a lasting impress on the manners and customs of the people". (p. 288).

It was, however, with the defeat of Prithviraj Chahamana by Muhammad Ghuri and his slave general Qutb-ud-Din Aibak at Tarain in 1192,[4] and the rapid conquest of Ajmer, Meerut, Kol (Aligarh), and finally Delhi that the establishment in India of Muslim rule became an accomplished fact. The area of this Kingdom, with Delhi as its Capital, extended from Delhi to Kalanjar on the one side and from Peshawar to Lakhnauti on the other, and it was to this heritage that Qutb-ud-Din Aibak succeeded in 1206 after the death of Muhammad Ghuri as the first real Sultan of the Slave Dynasty.

From 1193, however, the impact of Islam began to be felt in all spheres in this area, and was gradually extended during the rules of the various dynasties, Slave, Khalji, Tughluq, Saiyid and Lodi, for over three centuries till Babur by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526 laid the foundations of the Mughal Empire[5] in India on the ruins of the Afghan Sultanate.

The Sultanate Period.—Soon after the collapse of the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire in *c.* 940 there was a vast and almost sudden deterioration in Indian polity in North India. For almost two centuries the conditions remained in a fluid state, till, as remarked already, the Sultanate was established after the victory of Muhammad Ghuri at Tarain in 1192.

The Sultanate, however brought no settled existence. As Ibn Hasan has concluded in his scholarly work,[6] it "had to safeguard itself against repeated foreign invasions from the north-west, against the ambitions and adventures of the ruling section, and finally against local powers and elements, which could combine at any time against the newly established power''. To this was added a deep rooted contempt of the bulk of the people who did not follow the ruler's religion.

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[4] See *Cambridge History of India,* cited above, pp. 1-10, and Ishwari Prasad, *loc. cit.* (1948) pp. 74-99.

[5] See *Cambridge History of India,* IV, pp. 14-16 (1937) where it is stated that "On the Friday following Babur's arrival in Delhi (27 April, 1826) his name was read in the Grand Mosque as 'Emperor of Hindustan' ".

[6] Ibn Hasan—*The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire,* pp. 48-50 (Oxford, 1936).

With the political structure vacillating not only from dynasty to dynasty but also from one king to another, and the constant pre-occupation of the rulers with extensive military expeditions for the extension of the kingdom, for dealing with the rebellious military chiefs in various parts of the state, and for the suppression of the recalcitrant local elements, there was hardly any possibility of the socio-economic structure being stabilized and developed along rational lines. Nor could any great cultural advances be expected, as welfare of over ninety per cent of the subjects, who were non-Muslims, was not regarded as the primary concern of the alien government, rather they and their customs, and institutions were looked down upon as uncivilized, or at best ''treated with reluctant toleration and consideration if only from expediency and not from choice''.[7] From the point of view of these people it was more a period, and wherever possible, of resistance which when it failed in the political field was projected in the sphere of culture and social relations.

Even agriculture, though it was the main source of revenue, did not flourish as a result of discriminatory and highly repressive policy of assessment, and the measures adopted by the lowly paid and generally corrupt officials for its realization. Further, except for the solitary exception of Firuz Tughluq, none of the rulers took any steps for either the improvement and development of agriculture, or for bettering the lot of the cultivators. This is hardly to be wondered at when it is remembered that the very large majority of the tillers of land were non-Muslims, who according to the generally followed Turko-Afghan policy of administration were to be persecuted till they were either converted or exterminated.

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[7] P. Saran—*Islamic Polity*, pp. 19, 20 (Allahabad: Banaras).

In addition as Ashraf[8] has stated "the Sultan of Delhi was in theory an unlimited despot, bound by no law, subject to no ministerial check, and guided by no will except his own. The people had no rights, only obligations; they had to carry out his commands". *En passant* it may be mentioned that the invasion of India by Chengiz Khan in 1221, and the ever recurring raids by the Mongols during the regimes of the Slave and Khalji dynasties greatly devastated the areas visited by them, while Timur's invasion in 1399 resulted in widespread anarchy. As Ishwari Prasad[9] has remarked, "The age of economic distress began towards the close of the fourteenth century. The empire broke up into several independent states, and Timur's invasion in 1399 caused much confusion and drained the wealth of the country. Trade and agriculture were dislocated, and the cities that lay on the route of the invader were robbed of their wealth. The empire of Delhi lost its importance, and provincial kingdoms became famous for their wealth, military resources and their architectural activities. . ." During this period the Sultanate though it constituted a powerful factor by its military raids formed comparatively a small part of the whole country. The results of the impact of the Sultanate on the administrative, social, religious, cultural and architectural life of the country have to be considered in the light of the conditions as briefly summarized above.

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[8] K. M. Ashraf—*Journa. Asiat. Soc. Bengal* (Letters) 1. p. 129 (1953). See also Ibn Hasan, *loc. cit.*, pp. 41-51, and P. Saran —*The Provincial Government of the Mughals*, pp. 26-39 (Allahabad, 1941).

[9] Ishwari Prasad—*A Short History of Muslim in India*, p. 190 (Allahabad, 1939).

Administration: As has been indicated above, practically very little was achieved in the administrative field during the Sultanate period. Various experiments were tried to evolve a sound administrative system and machinery, but the results achieved were more negative than positive. For establishing peace the rulers had to contend not only against the Hindus who formed the resistant elements, but they were in constant conflict of one form or another with their own *Amirs* or Military chiefs whom they appointed as governors of the various administrative divisions, and which were granted to them as fiefs with feudal rights and obligations. Practically all appointments were reserved for this favoured class, and no Hindu was ever appointed to any high office, whether in the civil or the military fields. Thus while the government in theory was centralised in the ruler, these chiefs in practice carried on the administration of their respective areas not in accordance with a laid down policy but more in their own interest rather than that of the central government or the people.

In connection with the revenue department, however, as Saran has well summed up ''the early Sultans (and I would add the *Amirs*) had very greatly to resort to the aid of the local machinery. They had no trained staff to do the work of assessment and collection. Hence it had to be left to the rajas, rawats, chaudhuries and muqqadams. But under Ala-ud-din Khalji's government, amirs were appointed for the purpose and superseded the former functionaries. The incidence of tax varied greatly from time to time, between twenty to fifty per cent generally. It was first collected in the local treasury and after the deduction of the expenses of administration, the balance was forwarded to the imperial treasury".

Assessment of revenue[10] on the basis of the actual measurement of the cultivated area, as had been the case in the pre-Muslim period, had fallen into disuse in north India. It was revived by Ala-ud-din Khalji, mainly in the Doab Region, but no details of the methods or instruments of measurement are available and, in any case, it was not in force during the later regimes. Revenue records were apparently maintained in Persian, but this did not prove very successful as most of the actual workers did not know Persian. In the independent kingdom of Bijapur, therefore, Yusuf Adil Shah[11] (1534-57) ordered that the public account be kept in Hindi, and as a result not only many Brahmans were appointed to the Finance Department, but Hindu officials began to exercise "considerable powers in the revenue department".

As the administrative machinery of both the central Government and the provincial units was mainly concentrated in large towns, several new townships were founded both by the Sultans and the *Amirs* throughout the kingdom. Administration of the villages, however, during this period continued to be carried out by the more or less autonomous *panchayats*[12] or village councils, which had functioned throughout the country in one form or another from very early times. The *panchayat* looked after the welfare of the community in all spheres; it not only acted as an arbiter in all types of disputes, but also maintained law and order in the village.

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[10] K. S. Lal—*History of the Khaljis*, p. 246 (Allahabad, 1950); also see P. Saran—*Studies in Medieval Indian History*, pp. 77 and 151 (1952).

[11] Vide N. N. Law—*Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 93 (London, 1916); his account is based on the contemporary Muslim historian Firishta.

[12] For *panchayats* see J. Matthai—*Village Government in British India* (London, 1913), and P. Saran—*The Provincial Government of the Mughals*, pp. 166, 167, and 236-249 (1941).

Social: In the social field the strong conservatism and the natural antipathy of the Hindus against the Muslim invaders, and the policy of religious intolerance and unrelenting persecution of the non-Muslim population by the rulers constituted insurmountable barriers against any fusion of the conquerors and the conquered. At the same time close contacts between the two over such a long period naturally brought about changes in the social lives of both; in the absence of concrete information, however, it is not possible to enlarge on this theme. There was a fundamental change in the life of the women, however, to which a special reference is necessary. Due to the seclusion and low status of women in the Muslim society and law and the sense of insecurity that followed the inroads of the invaders, women, who so far had enjoyed an honoured status in society and carried on their work without hindrance or restraint, were forced to seek refuge in their homes, and the adoption of *Pardah*[13] which resulted therefrom greatly influenced the life of women besides reducing their status.

Religion: In the religious field the earlier part of the period coincided with an era of great unsettlement and upheaval for the Hindus. Neo-Brahmanism had succeeded in ousting Buddhism and Jainism, but it failed to provide any bulwark against the onslaughts of the Muslim invaders. Demolition and destruction of the large numbers of temples, with their presiding deities, all over the land by the Muslim conquerors, and large scale conversions shook the convictions of a section of the Hindus in the infallibility of their religious beliefs while in the rest they made them more rigid. The emphatic stress of Islam on the Unity of God influenced the outlook of some reformers of the Hindu religion during the period. It was in this period that the later schools of the *Bhakti* Cult developed in the country. They advocated that true religion consists in *Bhakti* or real devotion to God, and not in the practice of elaborate rituals and observances; they also denounced caste dogmas. The followers of these reformers included both Hindus and Muslims, and their teachings besides reforming the prevailing religious practices went a long way in bringing Hindus and Muslims together. In this context has also to be mentioned the influence of the large numbers of Muslim intellectuals and spiritual leaders who migrated to India in the wake of the Muslim traders after the conquering armies had opened a new land for them. Not only were they responsible for the conversion of a large number of Hindus to the Muslim faith, but ''through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth of India''. The names of Khwajah Muin-ud-din Chishti of Ajmer, Baba Farid of Pak Patan, Saiyid Gesudaraz of the Deccan deserve special mention.

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[13] Vide K. M. Ashraf—*Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal* (Letters), I, p. 244 (1935).

Culture: The famous Universities and centres of learning in north India had disappeared or grown stagnant before the advent of the Muslim rule, and such of the great centres of learning which survived, were destroyed by the Muslim conquerors and the vast knowledge, religious, legal and secular, was preserved by the learned castes with tenacity. The Muslim conquerors introduced a new system of education based on Saracenic ideals through the media of Arabic and Persian, but in spite of the establishment of a large number of *madrassas*[14] (schools), and even the so-called colleges by the rulers and *Amirs,* often as adjuncts of mosques, they served only a small section of the people, and thus cannot be regarded as having helped in the spread of education in the country. This was particularly so, for the large non-Muslim majority which was not admitted to these institutions. The education of the majority of the population was not regarded as a responsibility of the state, and it was only towards the end of the period during Sikandar Lodi's rule that the Hindus connected with the courts of Muslim rulers commenced to study Persian literature''.[15]

One outstanding factor, however, which materially helped in the development of education and culture was the introduction of paper, as a medium for writing, in India during this period. Though paper was invented in China[16] in 105 A.D., it is almost certain that in spite of fairly close contacts that had been developed between India and China, it was not introduced into India by the Chinese. As Gode[17] has mentioned, a Chinese traveller who visited India in the latter half of the seventh century, had to send for paper and cakes of ink from China, as neither Chinese paper nor any manufactured in India was available. Kaye[18] definitely fixed twelfth century as the date of introduction of paper into India and Europe by the Muhammadans, while Abdul Qadir[19] states that ''paper came in India about the tenth century A.D.''

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[14] For details of educational institutions founded during the periods by the rulers of various dynasties, and the minor Muslim kingdoms see N. N. Law, *op. cit.* (1916), pp. 18-117.

[15] N. N. Law, *op. cit.* (1916), p. 76.

[16] P. K. Gode—"Migration of Paper from China to India" in K. B. Joshi--*Paper Making as a Cottage Industry,* (Poona, 1944), p. 210.

[17] P. K. Gode, *loc. cit.*, p. 210.

[18] G. R. Kaye, *Arch. Survey of India,* XLIII, p. 9 (1927).

[19] Abdul Qadir, *loc. cit.* (1951) p. 298.

The part played by paper in the development of education and the advancement of learning in India, as indeed elsewhere, cannot be over-stressed.

With the introduction of paper and later its manufacture in the country, it became possible more readily to produce manuscript copies of works in various branches, and thus facilitate teaching and learning. Preparation of such manuscripts was undoubtedly a laborious task, but it resulted in great development of the art of calligraphy. Learned men could now write their works with greater ease, and thus make available the results of their labours and knowledge to a much larger public. It also led to the foundation of larger number of libraries, by the intelligentsia both by acquisition of manuscripts and having copies specially prepared for them. As instances may be mentioned the library of Jalal-ud-din Khalji[20] at Delhi, the library of the Bahmani kings at Ahmadnagar,[21] and the library of some 3,000 volumes attached to the college[22] founded by Muhammad Gawan at Bidar.

A few Sanskrit works[23] were translated into Persian, while for the first time a number of historical works[24] were written both by official court historians and independent authors. In Bengal, the development of the Bengali language was materially helped by the rulers Nasir Shah, Husain Shah and others by having Sanskrit works,[25] such as *Mahabharata, Bhagavata-Purana* and others, translated into Bengali.

20-22. N. N. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 90, 87-89.

[23] See N. N. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 65 for *Dalail-i-Firuzshahi;* p. 70 for *Kurrat-ul-Mulk,* a book on vtterinary science; and p. 77 for *Tibb-i-Sikandri,* a work on medicine and the treatment of diseases.

[24] Among the more important historical works of the period are: *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us Siraj; *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* by Zia-ud-Din Barni; *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* by Shams Siraj Afif; and *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* by Ghulam Yahya bin Ahmad.

[25] Vide N. N. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-111.

This period also marked a great development of modern languages, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, etc. Some Muslim writers also began to write in Hindi. Amir Khusrau[26] the famous Persian poet is said to have composed many Hindi verses.

Finally a new Hindustani language or Urdu, as a medium of expression for gradually increasing contacts between the Hindus and Muhammadans, began to be developed towards the end of this period. This was the result of the synthesis of Hindi words and expressions with words of Persian, Arabic and even Turkish origin. As Banerjee[27] has aptly concluded: "This mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this coordination of unknowns resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdu language".

Art: The Sultanate period was an era of noteworthy activity in the architectural field. Soon after the conquest of north India the conquerors started building imposing mosques and other edifices not only to provide for the religious needs of the Muslims, but also as symbols of conquest and for impressing the vanquished with the majesty of their power. The earliest buildings of the Slave Dynasty were the great Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque with the magnificient Qutb Minar at Delhi, and the Qutbi mosque at Ajmer about the end of the twelfth century out of the materials that became available from the demolished Hindu and Jain temples. From this time onwards, large numbers of mosques, mausolea, forts, palaces, towns and buildings of public utility, were built not only in

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[26] Muhammad Wahid Mirza—*The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau,* p. 227 (Calcutta, 1935).

[27] Vide Abdul Qadir, *loc. cit.,* pp. 273.

Delhi but in various provincial capitals, and later in the independent kingdoms ruled by Muslim chiefs that sprang up in different parts of the country.

In this brief review it is only possible to refer to the main characteristics of this architecture, and how it influenced and was in its turn transformed by the highly developed indigenous architecture of the land. At the outset it has to be noted, that, as has been pointed out by Marshall, up to this time ''concrete had been little used in India and mortar scarcely ever''. In the trabeate type of architecture, while the Hindu artisans were not wholly ignorant of the construction of arches, they could not utilise this type of construction in the absence of a suitable cementing medium. As a result, Hindu system of construction was ''based on column and architrava'', while Muslim system that was developed in India employed arches and vaults. Strength and grace were the outstanding characteristics of Hindu architecture, but variety of mouldings, and profuseness of decoration in which plant and floral designs, and animal and human figures were extensively used, however, often tended to obscure its main structural features.[28]

The earlier buildings of the Sultanate period at Delhi built out of the remains of temples by Hindu craftsmen, who were not only masons but skilled sculptors, bear a definite stamp of the traditions of Hindu architecture. Buildings of a later date, however, in which the Muhammedan builders began to assert their traditions and ideas and allowed relatively little scope to the Hindu craftsmen, are marked not only by their breadth and spaciousness, but also by great changes in form and decoration. Pendative and squint arches, domes, minars and minarets, half-domed double portals are characteristic of these buildings, while for decorations, colour, lines, flat surface carvings of flowing arabesques, geometrical patterns, and beautifully executed letterings of sacred texts or historic inscriptions are extensively used in place of the elaborate sculptures of Hindu architecture. At Jaunpur, and in the Deccan there were only slight changes in the local styles, while in Bengal the well-developed system of building in brick, with chiselled and moulded adornments of the local Hindu style, was generally followed. In Gujarat the beautiful Gujarat style was adopted *en bloc* as also in Kashmir the striking wooden architecture with such modifications as were essential from the religious and utilitarian points of view.

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[28] Martin S. Briggs—*Muslim Architecture in India,* p. 227, in *The Legacy of India,* edited by G. T. Garratt, (Oxford, 1951).

In short, this period marked the evolution and development of a new type of Hindu-Muslim architecture in which ''the simple severity of the Muslim architecture was toned down, and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu was restrained. The craftsmanship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu, the arcuated forms, plain domes, smooth-faced walls, and spacious interiors were Muslim superimpositions''.[29]

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[29] Tara Chand, *op. cit.* (1946), p. 243.

XVIII

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

THE Mughal Empire, which was ruled by six Great Mughal Emperors, Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, and eleven Emperors styled as the "Later Mughals", has been stated to have come to an end with the third battle of Panipat on 14th January 1761; the last real Emperor, Shah Alam, "in 1803 was formally taken under the protection of that power (the British) which the victory of Plassey had already designated as successors of the Great Mughals",[1] and the last two Emperors, Akbar II and Bahadur Shah II, while retaining the title, were only pensioners of the British Government. Finally in this brief review has to be included the short interregnum of some sixteen years during which the Sur Dynasty ruled as the Kings of India. Of this period some six years of Sher Shah's rule after the defeat of Humayun are most significant from the point of view of the government of the country, since the policy and lines of administration laid down by Sher Shah[2] formed the bases along which Akbar the Great Mughal was able to consolidate and run the Mughal Empire.

The short period of some fifteen years of the rule of the first two Mughal Emperors, Babur and Humayun, is of very little importance from the point of view of the heritage which has come down to us. The two Emperors continued the administrative arrangements of the Sultanate period, and did not introduce any fundamental changes either in the political divisions of the kingdom or the administrative machinery.[3] Babur started a number of building projects, mainly in connection with the construction of ''pleasances, pavilions, baths, wells, tanks and fountains'',[4] but practically no trace of these is left. The three mosques attributed to him do not possess ''any special architectural significance''. He laid down two gardens,[5] the Ram (or Aram) Bagh, and Zuhra Bagh at Agra, and apparently popularised the use of the Persian wheel (or water-wheel, as it is described in his *Memoirs*) for irrigation.

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[1] *Cambridge History of India*, IV, p. 448 (1937).

[2] For Sher Shah see K. Qanungo—*Sher Shah* (Calcutta, 1931); P. Saran—*Islamic Polity*, pp. 54-81 (Allahabad: Banaras); and the same author's *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, pp. 24-103 (Delhi, 1952).

The administrative arrangements and regulations of Humayun, as described by Khwand Amir,[6] are of no special interest. He started building a new capital, Dinpanah,[7] at Delhi, but this was demolished by Sher Shah, and is now ''hardly traceable among the ruins of old Delhi''. According to Khwand Amir's account,[8] he also built two other buildings at Agra, but it has not been possible to trace any of them.

Sher Shah: There was a short interregnum of some eighteen years from 1538 during which the empire was ruled, not by the Mughals, but by five Afghan kings of the Sur Dynasty; of this the period of six years of Sher Shah's rule is of special significance. Haig's description[9] of Sher Shah as "the greatest of the Muslim rulers of India", is justified by the great administrative skill and care that marked his rule, and the sound system of government and administration that was developed by him. In spite of the fact that his rule lasted for less than six years, and even during this period he had to carry out extensive military operations, he initiated and carried out far-reaching schemes of reorganisation of the administration.

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[3] P. Saran—*Hhe Provincial Government of the Mughals*, pp. 47-49 (1941).

[4] Percy Brown—*Cambridge History of India*, IV, p. 524 (1937).

[5] C. M. Villiers Stuart—*Gardens of the Great Mughals*, p. 89 (London, 1913); see also J. Leyden & W. Erskine, *Memoirs of Zehir-ed-Din Muhammad Babur* (2nd revised edn. by L. King, London, 1921), p. 206.

[6] Vide Baini Prashad's translation of Khwand Amir's *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, pp. 23-49 (Calcutta, 1940).

[7] See Khwand Amir's work cited above, pp. 59-52, and Percy Brown, *loc. cit.*, pp. 524, 529.

[8] Khwand Amir, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58.

The kingdom[10] of Sher Shah was far more extensive than that of Humayun, and, while he apparently retained the former divisions of the country, he clearly defined the territorial limits of the *subahs,* and, except for Multan and Bengal, established a uniform system of administration throughout his dominions. His provincial governors were liable to punishment for violation of the government regulations. "Thus under Sher Shah the provinces attained, both territorially and administratively, a definite stage in their evolution, which became the substructure of Akbar's edifice."[11]

Similarly Sher Shah's Revenue System[12] for the assessment and collection of land revenue on the basis of measurement and classification of land into three categories, and the option of payment of revenue, fixed at 33 per cent of the produce, in cash or kind, formed the basis of the system introduced during Akbar's reign. For the convenience of the cultivators the accounts were maintained both in Persian and Hindi, and while strict collection of revenue was enforced, the Chief Munsif was enjoined to see that the cultivators were not unduly harassed. Crime was rigorously suppressed, and the policy of holding the village headmen responsible for surrendering "those who committed crimes in their villages or of criminals who took refuge in them" ensured greater peace and tranquility.

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[9] Sir Wolseley Haig—*Cambridge History of India*, IV, p. 55. In this connection, however, see A. L. Srivastava, *The Mughal Empire* (Delhi, 1952), pp. 93, 111, 112. He, in view of some recent work does not agree with Haig; but describes his "as a constructive genius of a high order", and adds that "to him belongs the credit of not only reviving the old and tried institution of the land, but also administrating them successfully and even improving them by eliminating deficiencies and adding new elementns".

[10] For Sher Shah's kingdom, Subahs etc. see P. Saran, *op. cit.* (1941), pp. 49-62, and his later detailed paper in *Studies in Medieval Indian History* (1953), pp. 49-56.

[11] P. Saran, *op. cit.* (1941), p. 62.

[12] P. Saran, *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, pp. 67-87 (1952); also see W. H. Moreland, *Cambridge History of India*, IV, pp. 456-458, (1937).

His policy of toleration[13] towards the Hindus and not debarring them from service, both civil and military, also contributed in no small measure to the success of the administration. By abolishing various duties, and his currency reforms Sher Shah materially helped the development of trade and commerce.

For the first time, since the advent of the Muslim rule, improvement of communications by launching an extensive programme of road building[14] was undertaken, and four main roads, one from Sonargaon in Bengal to the Indus running through Agra, Delhi and Lahore, the second from Agra to Mandu, the third from Agra to Jodhpur and Chitor, and the fourth from Lahore to Multan, were completed. Fruit trees were planted on both sides of the roads, and 1700 caravansarais, with separate accommodation and arrangements for the supply of food for Hindu and Muslim travellers, were built. He built forts at Rohtas, near

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[13] A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 111.

[14] Sir Wolseley Haig, *op. cit.*, p. 57 and A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 105, 106.

Jhelum, at Delhi, Kanauj and other places, while his mausoleum at Sasaram, built during his life-time, is justly regarded as an outstanding piece of architecture.

While authorities may differ regarding Sher Shah's administrative policy and reforms, they are all agreed that they formed the bases for the efficient and progressive government and administrative machinery developed by Akbar. The decline of the Sur Dynasty set in almost with Sher Shah's death. Islam Shah, the second ruler, carried out some further reforms, but by reducing their powers and privileges he "aroused[15] the tribal and clannish prejudices of his Afghan peers, and, therefore paved the way for the downfall of his dynasty."

Akbar: For the Mughal period it is only possible in this review to analyse briefly the enlightened policy and the great administrative reforms carried out by the great Mughal Emperor Akbar; while several of these were based, to a limited extent, on the institutions of the Sur Dynasty, Akbar's policy, administrative organisation and reforms bear the undoubted impress of his individual genius. He was, as Haig[16] has described him, "the greatest of all who ruled India during the era of dominance of Islam in that land. . . . He was the only one of the long line of rulers professing Islam who even conceived the idea of becoming the father of all his subjects, rather than the leader of a militant and dominant minority, alien in faith, and to a great extent in race, to the nations of India".

After extensive military expeditions, which resulted in the establishment of his rule over practically the whole of Northern India, Akbar, by enunciation of the principle of *Sulh-i-kull*, universal peace or toleration, made a serious attempt to conciliate all sections of his subjects. His policy towards the Rajputs, the abolition of the iniquitous religious taxes, appointment of Hindus to some of the highest offices of the kingdom, and the establishment of closer contact between the king and the people, were all designed with this end in view. He no longer continued to subscribe to the Islamic theory of kingship, but tried to cultivate a true national spirit in the country. While some authorities such as Tripathi, hold that his ideal of sovereignty was universal, not national, Srivastava[17] is not far wrong in concluding that "he identified himself completely with India and her culture and did his very best to advance her political, social, economic and cultural interests as well as any who might have belonged to the Indian race and the religion of the majority of her population. He dreamt of a united India, and by diplomacy and conquest, brought the whole of Northern India and a part of the Dakhin under one government and one political system".

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[15] A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.* p. 121.

[16] Sir Wolseley Haig—*Cambridge History of India,* IV, p. 153 (1937).

Akbar started with reorganisation of the administrative machinery from the top, i.e., with the central government. As a first step he "did away[18] entirely with the principle of one all-powerful Wazir in the Empire, and divided his powers and functions among four ministers of nearly equal power, rank and status". Further, by selecting his ministers, mainly on the score of their suitability for the posts, from any rank or class or sect, he "dealt a severe blow to the prestige, power and influence of the aristocracy in the state", which had repeatedly led to the downfall of rulers of various dynasties during the Sultanate period.

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[17] A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 239 (1952).

[18] Ibn Hasan—*The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 350 (Oxford, 1936).

For administrative purposes the empire was, as Abul Fazl[19] has recorded, divided "into twelve divisions, to each of which he gave the name of *subah* and distinguished them by the appellation of the tract of the country or its capital city. These were Allahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Dihli, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malwa; and when Berar, Khandesh and Ahmednagar were conquered their number was fixed at fifteen". The *subhas* were further divided into *sarkars* and *parganahs.* The states, the rulers whereof had accepted the suzerainity of the Emperor, while they were allowed to enjoy varying degree of autonomy, were reckoned as *sarkars* of the *subahs* near which they were situated. A uniform set-up of officials,[20] with well defined duties and powers, was appointed for the administration of the *subahs, sarkars* and *parganahs,* while the running of the local affairs in the villages was left to the village panchayats, as in the pre-Muslim and the Sultanate days.

A judicious fiscal policy was initiated, and as one of the measures for the conciliation of the large non-Muslim population religious taxes, such as pilgrim's tax and *Jizyah,* were abolished, while the adoption of a more rational system of duties and cesses helped in the development of trade and commerce. In a predominantly agricultural country land revenue naturally was the main source of income of the state, and while Sher Shah's system was followed in the earlier years of Akbar's reign, a series of innovations were tried to evolve an equitable and uniform system for the kingdom. This resulted in the adoption of the famous Revenue[21] System of Raja Todar Mal as amended by the *Ain-i-Dahsala,* which in spite of the inherent shortcoming of any system, resulted in Akbar's reign coming "to bear the aspect of a golden age."[22]

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[19] Vide P. Saran, *op. cit.,* p. 45 (1941).

[20] See P. Saran, *op. cit.,* pp. 1955-250 (1941), and A. L. Srivastava *op. cit.,* pp. 177-186 (1952).

[21] For full details see W. H. Moreland, *Cambridge History of India,* IV, pp. 455-468 (1937) P. Saran, *op. cit.,* pp. 281-320 (1940),

Currency was also placed on a sound footing, and the coins of Akbar's reign, manufactured in state mints, have justly received praise from numismatists.[23] Judiciary and police were reorganised to suit the changed conditions, while by enforcing the branding and muster-roll regulations, and introduction of the *Mansabdari* system[24] the army was converted into a relatively disciplined and efficient force.

Simultaneously with the establishment of peace and prosperity through an efficient administrative machinery there was a great development in the educational and cultural fields including art and architecture; these are briefly dealt with later for the Mughal period as a whole. Finally, as Ibn Hasan[25] states, "The devotion of the king to the multifarious duties and his attention to every phase of state activity guaranteed the continuity of the system once established, and his vigilance over officers of every rank and department ensured the maximum success possible."

Jahangir to the fall of the Mughal Empire: Jahangir did not make any material changes in the policy or the system of administration, but both finance and general administration had deteriorated to such an extent during his regime that his successor, Shah Jahan, "was largely occupied in restoring stability and efficiency".[26]

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and A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-201 (1952).

[22] W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 489 (1937).

[23] V. A. Smith, *Akbar, The Great Mughal,* p. 157 (Oxford, 1919).

[24] See P. Saran, *op. cit.*, (1941), pp. 257, 258, and A. L. Srivastava (1952), pp. 186-193.

[25] Ibn Hasan, *op. cit.*, (1936), p. 357.

[26] Sir Richard Burn, *Cambridge History of India,* IV, p. 218 (1937).

The destructive forces, which had begun to undermine the edifice of the Mughal Empire during Shah Jahan's regime due to his bigotry, gained increased momentum as a result of the unstatesman-like policy of Aurangzeb. His highly centralised despotism and the attempt ''to order and supervise in every minute detail'' all civil and military administration brought about a complete degeneration of the administrative machinery. His abrogation of Akbar's enlightened policy of religious toleration, and reverting to the ideal of transforming India into a strictly Islamic State, his discriminatory fiscal policy, and methods of administration of justice were responsible for ever-increasing resistance on the part of the Marathas, Rajputs, Bundelas, Jats and Sikhs,—who developed later into formidable power, and were in no small measure responsible for the down-fall of the Mughal Empire.

Apparently to prevent the recurrence of what happened when Aurangzeb became the Emperor by deposing Shah Jahan and after a fratricidal war, he kept his sons under strict surveillance, allowed them little authority, and certainly took no steps for training any of them as his successor.

The fratricidal wars of succession in the early years of the rule of the Later Mughals were the unfortunate result of this policy, and as Burn[27] has summed up ''The Delhi Empire now becomes the subject of contests between nobles who set up puppet rulers, establish a new hereditary rule of succession to public office, and carve out principalities for themselves which are independent of the emperor in all but name, and of which Hyderabad, Bengal, Oudh, and Rohilkhand are the chief. The Marathas, first enlisted by the Deccan kingdoms to oppose Jahangir's invading army, and gradually turning into a compact nation in their homeland, later engage in guerilla expeditions beyond its limits ....Weakened by the shattering raid of Nadir Shah, the Delhi empire cannot withstand them and they advance far into the Punjab''. The Maratha unity ended with their defeat at Panipat in 1761 by Ahmed Shah Abdali, and cleared the way for the establishment of the British rule on the ruins of the Mughal Empire.

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[27] Sir Richard Burn, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

General and Economic Conditions: The two hundred years of Mughal rule according to Sarkar,[28] ''from the accession of Akbar to the death of Muhamad Shah (1556-1749), gave to the whole of Northern India and much of the Deccan also, oneness of official language, administrative system, and coinage and also a popular *lingua franca''*. The country was unified and opened up, but there are no detailed records of any great extension[29] of the road-system of Sher Shah by the Mughals. The facilities for the travellers apparently decreased, as the ''Timurids were not careful to maintain memorials of the Afghan rebel'',[30] and travelling, except under proper esçort, was usually far from safe. A postal system was maintained, but this was mainly for the administration and not for the general public.[31] Town and cities prospered, while peasantry in the villages suffering equally from excessive taxation and from oppressive measures of collection were often driven ''to abandon the country and seek a more tolerable mode of existence, either in the towns or camps''.[32] For increasing revenue receipts repeated orders were issued to encourage agriculture, but no large scale extension of irrigation facilities, such as those provided by Firuz Tughluq, was carried out; greater stress, however, seems to have been laid on maintaining and increasing the numbers of reservoirs, lakes and wells for irrigation purposes.[33] In the imperial *karkhanahs*,[34] which had been started by Firuz Tughluq, and continued by the Mughal Emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb and in similar institutions of the nobles, luxury goods of great value and beauty were produced, but low wages and oppression appear[35] to have been the lot of the skilled workmen. Internal trade and commerce[36] were fairly organised, and with the establishment of contacts trade developed not only with countries in the Middle and Near East, but also with Europe. While "fertile provinces were pouring treasures at the imperial Mughal feet and these were expended in raising splendid palaces and pavilions, mosques and tombs, pleasure gardens and caravan sarais",[37] practically no measures were adopted for improving the general economic condition of the country. Moreland's[38] description, "Weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words gave bread for stones", though this may appear exaggerated, represents fairly accurately the position of the artisans and the peasants during the greater part of the period under review.

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[28] Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *Mughal Administration* (3rd Edn.), p. 238, Calcutta) 1935.

[29] See P. Saran, op. cit., (1941), pp. 410, 411, for works carried out by the Mughals.

[30] Sir Wolseley Haig, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[31] P. Saran, *op. cit.*, (1941), pp. 420-422.

[32] Vide Bernier as quoted in Moreland's *From Akbar to Aurangazeb*, p. 256 (London, 1923).

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[33] P. Saran, *op. cit.,* (1941), pp. 415-417.

[34] Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.,* (1935), pp. 186-197.

[35] Vide F. Pelsaert as quoted in Moreland (1923), p. 199.

[36] See Moreland, *op. cit.,* (1923), p. 126.

[37] See V. G. Dighe's address to the Ind. Hist. Congress as reported in *Hindustan Times* for December 31, 1954; see also K. R. N. Swamy's article—*The Wealth of the Mughals,* in *Hindustan Times* for March 3, 1955.

[38] W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.,* (1923), pp. 304, 305.

Cultural Activities: There was no department or officers in the Mughal set-up for looking after education, as this was not regarded as a responsibility of the state. The Mughal Emperors, as in the case of some of the rulers of the Sultanate period, encourage education by founding and subsidising *madrassas* and other educational institutions. Akbar's *Ain* 25[39] was the first outstanding attempt towards reforming and regulating educational methods for the teaching of Arabic and Persian on the one hand, and Sanskrit on the other. The adoption of Persian as the Court language provided a great incentive for the Hindus to take up the study of this language, and the results were similar to those when English replaced Persian as the court language[40] in 1837; before long the Hindus became so proficient in Persian as to be appointed even to posts[41] which were concerned with the drafting of *Farmans* or royal orders.

During the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, and to a limited extent in Shah Jahan's time, the imperial court was the Mecca for the learned men, and the Emperors encouraged them by the grant of rewards and stipends.[42] Royal libraries were built not only by the acquisition of manuscripts,[43] but by having works specially written and copied. Copies were prepared by expert calligraphists, and the works were illuminated with paintings by accomplished artists. Scholars were commissioned to translate works[44] from Sanskrit and other languages into Persian; such work was done by collaboration of Persian and Sanskrit scholars.

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[39] See H. Blockmann's translation of *Ain-i-Akbari,* Vol. I (Phillott's revised edn.) pp. 288. 289 (Calcutta, 1939); see also N. N. Law, *op. cit.* (1916), pp. 160, 161.

[40] See Baini Prashad—*Progress of Science in India during the past Twenty-five Years,* p. ix (Calcutta, 1938).

[41] Ibn Hasan, *op. cit.,* (1936), p. 196, where Chandra Bhan Brahman's appointment in the Section of *Farmans* in Shah Jahan's time is recorded.

[42] See N. N. Law, *op. cit.* (1916), pp. 169, 179, 193, 194 for for lists of learned men during the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

[43] See N. N. Law, *op. cit.,* (1916), pp. 94, 152.

Preparation of historical works was developed further from the stage it reached during the Sultanate period, and as a result of Akbar's orders Abul Fazl's famous works, *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* were written. Nizam-ud-din Ahmad's *Tabaqat-i-Akbari,* Abdul Qadir Badauni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* and a number of other historical works were compiled, while *Rajatarangini,*[45] the history of Kashmir in Sanskrit, was translated into Persian.

Akbar's reign also marked a great development of Persian literature, both prose and poetry, and of Hindu poetry. Tulsi Das, the author of *Ramayana* in Hindi, has been described as the "most outstanding figure in Indian Literature".[46] During the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan there were no marked developments in the literary field. Jahangir's *Memoir,* and a number of contemporary histories by the official court historians and compilation of a number of important Persian dictionaries, such as *Farhang-i-Jahangiri, Farhang-i-Rashidi* and *Burhan-i-Qatih* deserve special mention, as also the translations into Persian of several important Sanskrit[47] treatises as under the patronage of Prince Dara Shikoh. As in other cultural spheres education and the development of literature suffered a set-back during Aurangzeb's time, but an important legal work in connection with the codification of Islamic laws, the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri,* was compiled by eminent jurists.

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[44] For a list of such works see N. N. Law, *(op. cit.* (1916), pp. 147-150.

[45] Vide N. N. Law, *op. cit.,* (1916), p. 149.

[46] Sir George Grierson, as quoted by A. L. Srivastava, *op. cit.,* (1952), p. 206.

[47] N. N. Law, *op. cit.,* (1916), pp. 185, 186.

Arts and Painting: Akbar wanted as a part of his policy "to utilize to the utmost the natural resources of the empire and the indigenous institutions of its people; where these were deficient, his method was to strengthen or supplement them by elements borrowed from other sources, mainly from Persia,[49] began the revival of Arts and particularly of painting in the country. In his *Ain*[50] 34 the importance of painting is stressed, and as a result of the measures adopted a flourishing school of Mughal Painting developed during his reign. The use of paper as a medium also greatly advanced the development of graphic arts.

Not only talented Persian artists, like Mir Saiyid Ali of Tabriz and Kwaja Abdus Samad of Shiraz, but Hindu artists, such as Daswanath, Basawan and others were trained to execute miniatures for the illuminated manuscripts of *Zafarnama, Razmnama* etc., which formed part of the royal library. This library, as Percy Brown[51] has remarked, performed functions similar to those of the English National Gallery of Arts for the Indian artists.

Painting of portraits, scenes and animals reached their zenith during Jahangir's reign, and by that date two main schools of painting, the Mughal and the Rajput, could be distinguished. The Mughal School, which was an offshoot of the Central-Asian art, has also been designated as Indo-Persian or Indo-Timurid by various authorities. The Rajput School is "essentially Hindu in expression, and in many aspects demonstrates that it is the indigenous art of

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48. N. N. Law, *op. cit*,, (1916), p. 193.

49. Percy Brown, *Indian Painting Under the Mughals,* pp. 59, 60 (Oxford, 1924).

50. Blochmann, *op. cit.,* (1939), pp. 113-115.

51. Percy Brown, *op. cit.,* (1914), p. 67.

India, a direct descendant of the classical frescoes of Ajanta''.[52] Both these schools, however, were influenced by one another, and, as in the case of architecture, a synthesis of the two schools was gradually brought about. Decoration of walls with paintings on the lines of those executed in the Gwalior palace of Raja Man Singh, was also carried out by Persian and Indian artists at Fatehpur Sikri and in other places, but no great developments in this line have been recorded.

Architecture: The Mughals have been described as great builders, and this is fully borne out by the building of large numbers of cities, forts, palaces, mosques, mausolea, and other monuments which were built all over the country during the two centuries of their rule. In one of the earlier buildings, Humayun's tomb, built at Delhi during the early years of Akbar's reign Persian influences introduced ''new principles, wider possibilities, greater flexibility, and generally infused the building art with fresh life.''[53] These foreign influences were, however, soon toned down, and later buildings were built more on the style of Hindu-Muslim architecture that had been developed during the Sultanate period.

The two palace-forts at Agra and Lahore, and a later one at Allahabad, the new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, and his mausoleum at Sikandra were the main building projects of Akbar's time. Of these, three buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, the Jami Masjid, the Buland Darwaza, and the marble tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti are outstanding from the architectural point of view. His tomb at Sikandra, which was completed by Jahangir after his death, while an imposing edifice, lacks ''the quality of

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52. Percy Brown, *Indian Painting*, p. 54, (Calcutta, 1947).

53. Percy Brown. *Cambridge History of India,* IV, pp. 522-576, 532 (Cambridge, 1937).

mass which is one of the principles of beauty, and coherence which is the basis of style.''[54] The same defects are noticeable in Jahangir's mausoleum,[55] which was apparently designed on similar lines, but the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula at Agra built by his talented daughter, the Empress Nur Jahan, is rightly regarded as outstanding ''in the entire range of Mughal architecture, the delicacy of treatment and the chaste quality of its decoration placing it in a class by iself''.[56] It was built of marble, and inlaid decoration or *pietra dura* was used for the first time for ornamentation in this building. Jahangir's main legacy in this field was the building of pleasances, and his Shalimar garden[57] in Kashmir is an almost perfect example of a Mughal Garden; such gardens were also built by some of the nobles, and one by Shah Jahan near Lahore.

The reign of Shah Jahan has been described as the Golden Age of Mughal architecture. Not only did he build on a very extensive scale, but he also replaced the rather drab sandstone structures of his predecessors by marble palaces, and introduced several innovations in the earlier style of architecture. Of these, while the marble palaces in the Agra and Delhi forts and the Jami Masjid at Delhi are remarkable both by their style and construction, the masterpiece of architecture is the Taj Mahal at Agra, built as a mausoleum for his beloved spouse, Mumtaz Mahal. In addition to its great artistic merits, this architectural wonder of the world is remarkable for the care and technical skill employed in its construction, and the tribute that ''there is little doubt that both man and nature have combined to give a thing of supreme beauty to prosterity,''[58] is not exaggerated. Aurangzeb ''added a few structures,

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54-56. Percy Brown, *op. cit.* (1937), pp. 552, 551.

[57] C. M. Villiers Stuart—*Gardens of the Great Mughals*, p. 283, (London, 1913).

[58] *5000 Years of Indian Architecture* (Delhi, 1954), p. 41.

some of them large and pretentious,[59] to the long series of monuments erected by this dynasty, but compared with those of his predecessors they are decidedly inferior''; in fact they reflect the sudden decline of architecture and art generally towards the end of the seventeenth century.

Miscellaneous Arts and Crafts: A brief reference may here be included to the development of miscellaneous arts and crafts, such as enamelling, faience, parcel gilt work of Kashmir, knop and flower pattern, damascening[60] and papier-mache work, which were apparently introduced into India from Persia by the Muslim, and later developed as small-scale industries in different parts of the country. Similarly innovations were introduced in the manufacture of cotton and silk textiles, such as the fine muslin, *kalabutun*, *zarbaft*, etc., woollen shawls and carpets. Finally mention may be made of the discovery of the otto of roses by the mother of Empress Nur Jahan, who herself has been credited with many innovations in dress, jewellery, etc.[61]

Music: As is recorded in *Ain*[62] 20, Akbar had ''such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess''. There was a large number of musicians attached to his court, the chief being Tansen, one of the *Navaratna*,[63] about whom Abul Fazl says that ''a singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years''. According to Popley[64] during Akbar's reign ''*ragas* were considerably modified under foreign influence and, though some of these modifications transgressed the established practice, they were on the whole to the advantage of music and helped to give northern music some of its more pleasing characteristics''. Music continued to flourish during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, both of whom had large numbers of musicians attached to their courts. Its decline started after Aurangzeb ''abolished the singers and musicians just as he abolished the court-historians.''[65]

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[59] Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, (1937), p. 566.

[60] G. C. M. Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*, Vol. II, pp. 149, 150 (London, 1880), and T. N. Mukerji, *Art Manufactures of India*, pp. 57-177 (Calcutta, 1888).

[61] Beveridge and B. Prashad's English Translation of *Maathir-ul-Umara*, II, p. 1077, (Calcutta, 1952).

[62] Blochmann, op. cit., (1927), pp. 54, 680, 682.

[63] V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mughal* (Oxford, 1919), p. 359, note and B. Prashad, *Journ. Roy. As. Soc. Bengal* (Letters) X. p. 41 (1944).

Medicine: The Unani System of medicine was introduced into India by the Muslims. The large numbers of *Hakims,* both physicians and surgeons, attached to the royal courts and often holding high *mansabs,* provided an additional and relatively cheap agency for rendering medical aid to the sick.

While different views may be held regarding the sins of commission and omission, and failings and shortcomings of the Mughal Emperors during over two centuries of their rule in India, there can be little difference of opinion regarding how this period influenced the life of the people of the country.

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[65] Blochmann, *op. cit.,* (1927), p. 682, note 4.

XIX

INDIA AND THE WORLD

WESTERN World: The remarkable discoveries at Mohenjodaro have unmistakably shown that there was intercourse between that region and western Asia in the third millennium before Christ. It is difficult to say whether this connection was maintained unbroken down to the historical period for which we have positive evidence. But philological and archaelogical evidences exist to prove such connection at a later period.

There are vague allusions to sea-voyage even in the *Rig-veda,* but positive descriptions of sea-voyages are found in the Jatakas. We also learn from a Jewish chronicle that from about 800 B.C. onwards there existed a trade relation between India and the West.

The first political relation between India and the West was established when the Achaemenids of Persia by a series of conquests (549-525 B.C.) extended their empire to the Sindhu valley and probably conquered some territory to the east of that river.

The next important stage in the contact between India and Greece was inaugurated by the invasion of Alexander the Great (327-325 B.C.). Though the Greeks lost their Indian dominions soon after his death, the contact established between the two countries remained unbroken for a long time. The thirteenth rock edict of Ashoka specifically names five Greek rulers, and it is claimed that on account of the activities of Ashoka's missionaries his *dhamma* was followed in their dominions. The names of these rulers—Antiochus (of Syria), Antigonus Gonatas (of Macedonia), Alexander (of Epirus or Corinth), Ptolemy (of Egypt) and Magas (of Cyrene)—show that India had at this time intimate intercourse with the western world, though the extent of the influence of Buddhism in these regions cannot be determined. The fact stated by Megasthenes, that there was a special department in Pataliputra to look after foreigners indicates an influx of them into India about this time.

The foundation of the kingdom of Parthia shut off and importance of the sea-route between India and Western world. The inroads of the Scythians and the Yueh-Chis into Bactria, and the growing anarchy in Syria curtailed the facilities of the land-route and increased the popularity and importance of the sea-route between India and Western world. The important route followed in the third century B.C. was partly by sea, and partly by land, but gradually the all-sea-route became popular and Egypt became the point of contact between the Hellenistic world and India. Indian traders began to visit the Somali ports, and the visit of one Sophon is recorded in an inscription found in the ruins of an Egyptian shrine at Redesiye on the Nile. The existence of an Indian colony at Memphis has been presumed by the discovery of Indian figures. There is also ample evidence to prove that there was a large volume of sea-borne trade between India, Madagascar and Socotra.

In A.D. 45, Hippalus made his epoch-making discovery of the "existence of monsoon winds" which would enable the ships to sail right across the Indian ocean. Hitherto the ships had to keep close to the coast, and the journey was necessarily long and tedious. But after the discovery of Hippalus, Indian goods could reach Alexandria, the great emporium of the western world, in less than three months. The danger from pirates also became much less. The result was that whereas before the discovery of monsoon winds hardly twenty ships a year made the voyage, after it, on an average, a ship a day left the ports of Egypt for the East.

In addition to Hippalus's discovery, two other circumstances favoured the growth of trade between India and the western countries. The first and foremost was the foundation of the Roman Empire, which gave peace, facilitated communications and secured the trade routes. Secondly, articles of luxury from India were in great demand in Rome. The result was an unprecedented increase in the volume of trade. We learn from the Chinese notice of the Roman province of Syria in A.D. 125 that the gain from trade with India and Parthia was ten to one. Pliny estimated that nearly fifty million *sesterces* (half a million sterling) flowed every year from Rome to India to pay for the balance of trade. That this statement is no mere rhetoric is proved by the actual discovery of a very large number of Roman coins in India.

Active commerce between India and the Roman empire, through Palmyra and Alexandria, flourished till the third century A.D. Political relation was also maintained between India and Rome during this period. Probably more than one Indian state sent embassies to Augustus. We also hear of other Indian embassies to Rome during the first four centuries of the Christian era. There are specific references to Indian embassies visiting Trajan (A.D. 98-117), Hadrian (117-138), Antonius Pius (138-161), Heliogabalus (218-222), Aurelian (270-275), Constantine (323-353) and Julian (361-363). Two more Indian embassies were probably sent to Justinian in A.D. 530 and 552.

One important result of the development of this commercial and political intercourse was that an increasingly large number, both of Indians and Roman subjects, visited each other's country. Alexandria, according to all accounts, was the great meeting ground between the East and the West, and must have been visited by a large number of Indians, mostly traders. Dio Chrysostom (*c.* A.D. 117) refers to Indians as forming part of the settled population of Alexandria and notes that they came by way of trade. A gravestone with wheel and *trishula* (trident) attests the presence of Indians in Alexandria. It is interesting to note that some Brahmanas who visited Alexandria in A.D. 470 were the guests of Consul Severus. By means of this personal contact both India and the Roman world gained a more correct and intimate knowledge of each other.

Although Indian trade with the Roman empire declined to a considerable extent after the third century A.D., there is no doubt that it continued for at least two or three hundred years more. This is clearly demonstrated by the Roman coins issued in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries A.D. found in Southern India, which enjoyed a particularby brisk trade with the West. The Indian embassies to Roman Emperors also prove the existence of trade between the two countries.

Persia: From Amianus Marcellinus and Chinese Annals we learn that during the fourth century A.D. there was regular trade between India and Persia. Tabari (A.D. 838-923) writes that in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Khusrau (A.D. 590-628) a king of India sent to the Persian king ambassadors carrying a letter and presents. According to Bana, the stable of Harshavardhana (A.D. 606-647) was filled with Persian horses.

The Indian navy is referred to even in historical times. Ubulla, near Basra, was known in those days as "gateway of India", and its governor is said to have "always to fight against either the Arab Beduins on land or Indian navy on sea."

Central Asia and China: The territory between the river Sindhu and the Hindu Kush mountains may be regarded culturallly as a part of India during almost the whole of the Hindu period of the history of India. Certain references in the *Rig-veda* leave no doubt that the Indo-Aryans in the Punjab were intimately associated with Afghanistan. Their progress towards the east gradually lessened the bond between the two countries. But the eastern regions of Afghanistan were always regarded as parts of India, and the rest of the territory remained Indian in culture and predominantly within the political orbit of India, although subjected, like the Punjab, to the influence of the Persians, the Greeks, the Parthians, the Scythians and the Kushanas. The Mauryas exercised effective rule over the whole of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and both Buddhism and Brahmanism had a strong influence over the whole area, until the advent of Islam. So far as recorded evidence goes, we can hardly distinguish eastern Afghanistan and Baluchistan from India either from a political or cultural point of view.

The territory beyond the Hindu Kush mountains was also profoundly influenced by Indian culture. The Mauryan Empire, which included a part of these territories, and the missionary zeal of Ashoka must have contributed directly to this end. We have, however, evidence to show that along with Buddhism Indian culture was spread among the Parthians, the Yueh-Chis, the Sogdians and various other peoples of Central Asia before the beginning of the Christian era. Even the Sassanians of the third century A.D., regarded Bactriana as virtually an Indian country and the Oxus a river of Buddhists and Brahmanas.

In those days three routes started from Balkh (Bahlika, Bactriana) and carried goods to Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang) then the great centre of commercial, cultural and political intercourse between China on the one hand and India and western Asia on the other. Kashgar was the most important city on the road from Balkh to China.

A few sites on both the roads from Kashgar to China have been explored by various parties in recent times. The antiquities and archaeological remains discovered in course of these explorations have revealed almost a new world. They include ruined cities with hundreds of sanctuaries, images, wall-paintings etc., and clearly demonstrate that Indians settled in large numbers in various localities all over this region and introduced their art, religion, language, script and system of political administration. It is almost certain that they also set up small kingdoms, some of which flourished for a fairly long period. It is not possible to write a continuous or connected history of the Indian settlements in this region, we may here only mention some of the localities which can be definitely included within the zone of Indian culture and colonization.

Khotan, Kuchi and Qara Shahr were the most important centres of Indian culture. A Kharoshthi inscription refers to the Khotanese king Maharaja Rajatiraja Deva Vijita-simha. The ancient rulers of Kuchi bore Indian names such as Suvarnapushpa, Haripushpa, Haradeva, Suvarnadeva etc. Qara Shahr, then known as Agnidesha, was ruled by kings called Indrarjuna, Chandrarjuna etc.

These three kingdoms were the great centres of Buddhism of which the most important institution was the Gomati-*vihara* of Khotan. That Buddhism was the prevailing religion in all these localities is proved not only by the discovery of images and the remains of Buddhist *stupas,* shrines and *viharas* built after Indian models, but also by a large number of Buddhist texts writen in Sanskrit and Prakrit as well as in local languages of Central Asia and in Indian scripts both Brahmi and Kharoshthi. Large number of secular documents written in Indian languages and scripts on wooden tablets, leather, paper and silk have also been discovered. Many documents in non-Indian languages were written in Indian script, and tables containing complete alphabets of the Brahmi script have been found in Central Asia.

These documents were probably written during the first four centuries of the Christian era. The use of Indian language, style and script for purposes of administration, as far as the Lop-Nor region to the extreme east of Tarim basin, at the very threshold of China, shows the extent of the political influence of Indian colonists.

The literature discovered at Kuchi throws interesting light on the method of studying Sanskrit. The student began with learning the alphabet, and many alphabetical tables traced by more or less skilled hands have been dug out. Sanskrit grammar was then studied according to the Katantra system, presumably because it was more fitted than Panini for non-Indians. Later the students made verbatim translation from Sanskrit into Kuchean. In addition to famous religious texts like *Udanavarga*, we have actual examples of astronomical and medical texts treated in this manner.

Fa-hien (A.D. 399-414)* and Hiuen Tsang (A.D. 629-645) who passed through these territories have left vivid accounts of these great centres of Indian culture.

As in religion and literature, so in art, Central Asia was deeply influenced by India. Sten Konow remarks that the "art of Buddhist Khotan can be shown to have remained to the last under the predominating influence of Indian models."

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* The figures denote the duration of their travel.

China: The name of China was familiar to the Indians from very early period. It is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and the *Manu-Smriti* and varieties of Chinese silk are referred to in Kautilya's *Arthashastra.* We have clear evidence that there was regular commercial intercourse between India and China long before the beginning of the Christian era. Bamboo and textile goods from south-western China were brought to eastern India through Yunan and Burma, then carried across north India and Afghanistan and sold in the markets of Bactria in *c.* 127 B.C.

There are also reasons to believe that in the second or first century B.C., the sea-route between India and China was fairly well known. From what is known of the trade and colonization of the Indians all along this sea-route one can reasonably infer that the Indian vessels had a large share, if not the monopoly of this trade.

But as always happens, ideas were carried along with wares, and led to the introduction of Buddhism in China. According to Chinese official account this event took place in A.D. 65 during the reign of Han Emperor Ming-ti. He, it is said, brought from India two missionaries, named Dharmaratna and Kashyapa Matanga, who preached Buddhism among the people and translated Buddhist texts, which they had brought from India, into Chinese.

Since then many other Buddhist missions are recorded to have visited China from time to time. Most of these missionaries came from Central Asia. It should be noted that China paid a high compliment to Buddhism when she consented to learn it from the monks of Central Asia, which was in her eyes a country of barbarians.

Chinese contempt for the Central Asians was not without reason. While China was highly civilized at this time the region between Hindu Kush and China was peopled by races with a primitive type of civilization and no developed religious faith. Hence Buddhism spread there much more rapidly than in China. But from second century A.D., Buddhism made its influence felt among Chinese scholars and aristocracy. Not only the rulers of small principalities, but the Emperors of the Western Tsin dynasty, who brought about the unity of China were also great patrons of Buddhism; under their rule Buddhism became an important factor in Chinese life. During the reigns of Emperors Wu (A.D. 265-290) and Min (A.D. 313-316) monasteries were built in various parts of the country and 180 religious establishments were founded in Nanking and Chang-ngan. As centuries rolled by the power and influence of Buddhism gradually increased in China, and, as before, Buddhist monks of Central Asia, of various nationalities, took part in the missionary activity. Chinese scholars also began to come to India in increasing numbers, and Indian scholars went to China.

It is not possible to give here an account of these monks; we can only mention the names of some of them. The most notable amongst the monks who went from Central Asia to China are, She-kao (Lokottama), a Parthian prince of the 2nd century, and Fa-hu (Dharmaraksha), a Yueh-chi who went to China about a century later. But the greatest name amongst them is that of Kumarajiva, whose father was an Indian and mother a Princess of the reigning dynasty of Kuchi. Kumarajiva was also educated in India, so he may be regarded as an Indian. He went to China (401-412)* at the invitation of the Emperor, and is said to have translated more than one hundred Sanskrit texts, and was the first to interpret Mahayana Buddhism in China.

The Chinese monk Chu She-king started for India in

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* All the dates are in Christian era. The figures within parenthesis denote the duration of travel or sojourn.

A.D. 260 in order to study Buddhism, but he found such ample opportunities at Khotan that he did not proceed further.

With Fa-hien (399-414) begins the period of Chinese pilgrimage to India. Other monks also accompanied the famous pilgrim, of whom Pao-yun is the most well known. In 404 another group of Chinese monks led by Che-mong started for India and returned in 424. In 420 Fa-yong led twentyfive Chinese monks to India. Many others followed, of whom the most famous is Hiuen Tsang (629-645), who played a most distinguished part in establishing Buddhism on a solid footing in China, and improving the cultural relations between that country and India.

We get an idea of the place of Buddhism in Chinese life from the royal ovation received by Hiuen Tsang when he returned to the Chinese capital. According to his biographer, ''the Emperor and his court, the officials and the merchants, and all the people made holiday. The streets were crowded with eager men and women who expressed their joy by gay banners and festive music.''

After Hiuen Tsang large number of Chinese monks continued to visit India of whom the most well known is I-tsing (671-685).

Among the Indian Buddhist teachers who visited China we may mention Sanghabhuti (381-384), Gautama Sanghadeva (384-397), Punyatrata (404), Vimalaksha (406-413), Buddhajiva (423), Dharmamitra (424-442), Dharmayasha (400-424) Dharmakshema (414-432), Gunavarman (431-432), Gunabhadra (435-468), Prajnaruchi (516-543). During the sixth century Upashunya, Jnanabhadra, Jinayashas and Yashogupta went to China.

Of all the Indian monks who went to China, probably no name is better known in India than that of Paramartha. He was sent to China by a ruler of Magadha (probably the last Imperial Gupta ruler Vishnugupta) in response to a request of the Chinese Emperor Wu. Paramartha went to China in 546 and stayed there till his death in 569 translating no less than seventy Buddhist texts.

But the Indian monk who obtained the greatest celebrity in China was Bodhidharma, the younger son of an Indian king. He is almost a semi-mythical figure and various miracles are attributed to him. He visited China in the second quarter of the sixth century and was received by Emperor Wu.

Among the other aspects of Indian culture which Buddhism brought along with it, the most important was art. Not only images and pictures, but Indian artists inspired a new school of art which may be called Sino-Indian. A number of rock-cut caves at Tunhwang, Yun-kang and Long-men, colossal images of Buddha, 60 to 70 feet high, and fresco paintings on the walls of the caves illustrate this art.

Indian music also seems to have exerted a great influence upon China. It was introduced by Indian musicians settled in Kuchi, and soon became very popular. A musical party went from India to China in A.D. 581. In spite of some initial opposition Indian music became increasingly popular. According to a current Japanese tradition an Indian Brahmana named Bodhi went from China to Japan in the T'ang period and introduced there the Bodhisattva and Bhairo types of music.

Indian astronomy, mathematics and medicine were also popular in China. Indian astronomers were appointed on the official boards set up to prepare the calendars. Several Indian mathematical, astronomical and medical treatises were translated into Chinese.

Tibet: According to some Tibetan chronicles the founder of Tibetan royal dynasty was the son of an Indian king. This may not be accepted as a historical fact, but this tradition proves the strong influence of India on the history and culture of Tibet.

Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the first half of the seventh century during the reign of Sron-btsan-sgam-po. He became a Buddhist, had temples and monasteries built and a number of Buddhist texts translated. But the most notable contribution of the king to the cultural development of Tibet was the introduction of Sanskrit language and the system of writing from India.

Except for a slight temporary check in the middle of the eighth century, the progress of Buddhism in Tibet was almost continuous. Throughout the Pala period (*c.* A.D. 750-1150) Tibet was in close touch with India, particularly with the great Universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. Indian monks went to Tibet and preached there the new developments of Buddhism. The most famous amongst them was Atisha Dipankara (980-1053) who is even now remembered in that country with deep veneration. A large number of Buddhist texts, lost in India, are now only available in Tibet.

Japan, Korea and Mongolia: Buddhism and along with it Indian culture spread from Central Asia, China and Tibet to Mongolia, Korea and Japan. Chinese Buddhists exercised great influence in Korea and Japan, and at a later age Tibet became an important centre for propagation of Buddhism specially in Mongolia. We have, however, evidence of direct intercourse between India and some of these countries.

From I-tsing we learn that five Korean monks came to India in the seventh century. There was also direct intercourse between India and Japan. The Indian monk who is best known in this connection is Bodhisena, who went to Japan through China in A.D. 736 and was received with great honour. It seems that Buddhism and Sanskrit were already well known in Japan, for Bodhisena carried on conversation with the Japanese priest "both in Sanskrit and Japanese". Bodhisena died in Japan in 760.

The arrangement of Japanese syllabary closely follows the Sanskrit alphabet and is undoubtedly based upon it. The introduction of this system is attributed by some scholars to Bodhisena though others assign it to a later period. The use of Indian alphabets in Japan, however, dates probably from even an earlier period.

Islamic World: When Baghdad became the centre of the Muslim world, Indian culture reached it both directly as well as through Iran. Indian literature, at first translated into Persian, was later translated from Persian into Arabic. The most prominent example of this is furnished by the fables of *Kalila and Dimna* based on the *Panchatantra,* and probably the famous medical treatise *Charaka-samhita* was first known to the Muslim court in this way.

The direct contact between India and Baghdad is prominently noticeable during the reigns of al-Mansur (754-775) and Harun al-Rashid (786-809). Al-Biruni tells us that the "star-cycles as known through the canon of al-Fazari and Yakub ibn Tarik, were derived from a Hindu who came to Baghdad...in A. H. 154 (A.D. 771)." Again we learn from the same source, that the Hindu traditions regarding the distances of the stars were communicated to Yakub ibn Tarik by "the well-known Hindu scholar who in A.H. 161 (A.D. 778) accompanied an embassy to Baghdad." Two other Indian embassies visited Baghdad in 753 and 773.

The scholars who accompanied these missions brought several works on mathematics including the *Brahma-sphuta-siddhanta* and the *Khandakhadyaka* of Brahma-gupta. With their help these works were translated into Arabic by Arab scrolars, and it was thus that the Arabs became first acquainted with a scientific system of astronomy.

It was probably through these scholars that the Hindu numerals were first definitely introduced amongst the Arabs. Whether Europe derived this knowledge directly from the Indians or from the Arabs is a disputed question, but there is no doubt that the world is indebted to India for the epoch making discovery of the decimal notation based on the place value of the first nine numbers and the use of zero. The Indians also taught the Arabs ''algebra'', and it was through the Arabs that the nations of the west learnt this branch of mathematics.

During the reign of Harun al-Rashid, contact with India was promoted by the powerful ministers of the Barmak family who cherished a longing for Indian culture being Buddhist converts to Islam. Invited by them, Indian scholars came to Baghdad and translated books on medicine, pharmacology, toxicology, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, algebra, arithmetic and other subjects. Several texts were translated by the order of Harun al-Rashid These include, among others, such famous works as *Charaka, Sushruta, Nidana* and the *Ashtanga* of Vagbhata. The name of the Indian translator of *Sushruta* is written in Arabic as Mankh. He cured Harun al-Rashid of a severe illness and was appointed by the grateful Caliph as the head of the royal hospital.

The Arab merchants visited India in increasingly large numbers, and many of them wrote interesting accounts of India. Indian kings built mosques for Muslims settled in India. We learn from ibn Haukal (10th century) that in the dominion of the Rashtrakutas ''Musulmans lived in many cities and none but Musulmans ruled over them on the part of the ruling authority''. This was a remarkable concession to the foreign settlers.

XX

INDIAN COLONIES IN THE FAR EAST

To the ancient Indians, the Indo-Chinese Peninsula and the East Indies were vaguely known as Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa, the El Dorado. The lure of gold and spices attracted them and they braved the perils of the sea to seek fortune in these distant unknown lands. They also proceeded to the Far East by land routes through Bengal, Manipur and Assam.

No systematic account of this early trade with the Far East is available. Popular tales preserved in the Jatakas, *Brihat-katha, Katha-kosha* etc., relate how princes and merchants sailed from Bhrigukachchha (Broach in Gujarat) or Tamralipti (Tamluk in West Bengal) and returned with fabulous riches. The *Milinda-panha* and *Arthashastra* of Kautilya also mention Suvarnabhumi, and the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (1st century A.D.) refers to Indian intercourse with these countries.

Literature is justly regarded as the echo of national life. The old stories and folk tales indicate that the spirit of adventure was a characteristic feature of the Indians. Trade was their chief stimulus, but in course of time commercial activity led to the establishment of cultural and political relations. Traders settled and spread Indian culture; adventurous Kshatriya princes came to seek their fortunes and established kingdoms; missionaries came to spread their religion. There is no doubt that as early as the second century A.D., Indians ruled over kingdoms in the remotest parts of Indo-China. Colonisation, as distinguished from the establishment of political authority, evidently took place much earlier, and the beginnings of trade relations, which preceded colonization, may be placed two or three centuries before the Christian era, if not earlier still.

Local traditions refer to the establishment of political authority by immigrant Indians almost all over South East Asia. According to available evidence, a Hindu named Kaundinya established a kingdom in Cambodia. This kingdom known as Fu-nan extended over Cochin-China and the southern part of Cambodia in the first century A.D. Kaundinya and his descendants introduced the elements of civilisation and taught the people to wear clothes. Since then many dynasties with kings bearing Indian names ruled in Cambodia (Kambuja) at least up to the fourteenth century.

Another Hindu kingdom arose in Annam. It was known as Champa, with its capital at Champa-nagari or Champa-pura now represented by Tra-kieu, a little to the south of Quang Nam. The earliest known Hindu king of Champa is Shri Mara, who established a dynasty about the second century A.D. Here also under many dynasties the Hindus created a mighty kingdom, which lasted long after the Hindus had lost political supremacy in India.

Although we do not possess continuous history of any other kingdom, we know the existence of several others. For example there was the kingdom of Shrikshetra in Lower Burma, and Dvaravati in Siam. Hindu colonies were also established among the Thais, their most important kingdom in Yunan being known as Gandhara, and one part of it was also called Videha-rajya. A Hindu dynasty called Shrī-Dharmarajanuja-vamsha ruled in Arakan from A.D. 600-1000. Many Hindu colonial kingdoms were also established in the various islands of the East Indies, Sumatra, Java, Borneo and Bali which were collectively known as Suvarnadvipa. The Hindu colonists also set up several kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula. Here in the eighth century arose the mighty empire of the Shailendras, comprising Sumatra, Java and Bali, chiefly remembered to-day as the builders of Barabudur.

The Hindu culture in all its aspects permeated the life of the people in these colonies to an extent which it is difficult to convey fully within the short scope of this article. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the delineation of a few prominent characteristics under the broad heads of society, religion, art, and literature.

Society: The caste-system, which is the most distinctive characteristic of Hindu society, and may be regarded as its fundamental basis, was introduced in Java, Sumatra, Champa and other colonies. For we have not only references to "Chaturvarnya", or four castes, but there is also specific mention of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, both in literature and inscriptions. This caste system was not, however, as rigid as we find it in India to-day, but rather resembled what was in vogue here in ancient times. We can get some idea of the caste-system in these remote colonies by studying the main features which prevail even to-day in the island of Bali. There, as laid down in *Manu-smriti,* marriage among different castes is prevalent, but while a man may marry a girl of his own or lower caste, a woman may only marry one of equal or higher caste. The children of mixed marriages belong to the caste of the father, though they differ in rank and status according to the caste of the mother. The marriage of woman with a man of lower caste is punishable with death.

In Bali the Shudras are not despised or regarded as impure and untouchable. Nor are the castes tied down to specific occupations. Thus men of all castes take to agriculture, and the Shudras, in addition, follow other arts and crafts. We also find another characteristic feature of ancient Indian caste-system, namely inequality in the eyes of law which lays down, for the same offence, punishment in inverse ratio to the superiority of caste of the offender, and in direct ratio to that of the offended.

In some places, as in Champa, although there was a theoretical division into the four castes, practically there was no sharp distinction among the people outside the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, and even these two formed classes rather than castes. Nor did the Brahmanas occupy a position of unquestioned supremacy. They enjoyed great dignity, and the murder of a Brahmana was regarded as a particularly heinous crime. But they did not dominate the king and the state to the same extent as in India. It is interesting to note that in many instances where the two classes are mentioned together, the Kshatriyas are placed before the Brahmanas, as we find in Buddhist and Jain texts in India. In Bali, even to-day, the ruling princes, be they of Kshatriya or Vaishya caste, are regarded as superior to their Brahmana subjects, and although theoretically a prince is not allowed to marry a Brahmana girl, this is often done by the legal subterfuge of expelling a Brahmana girl and adopting her in the house of the prince.

The position of woman in many of these colonies seems to have been much better than in India, at least so far as political rights are concerned. Gunapriya of Eastern Java ruled in her own rights, and her name was placed before that of her husband. There are instances in later history of a daughter succeeding to the throne, although she had two brothers, and acting as regent for her mother although she had a grown-up son. Some ladies occupied the highest offices of state, and wives of officials are stated in inscriptions to have received presents from the king along with their husbands on ceremonial occasions. The old literature as well as the present day customs in Bali indicate that there was no purdah system and women freely mixed with men. The system of burning the widow along with the dead husband was in vogue. Sometimes even the slaves and concubines of the dead perished with him. This is now forbidden to the Shudras, and generally the Sati rite is confined to royal families.

In addition to the social division into castes there was also distinction between the aristocracy and common people. The two divisions were overlapping to a certain extent, and though the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas formed the bulk of the aristocracy it certainly included other people. The external symbols of aristocracy, as in India, were (1) special articles of dress and ornaments, (2) right to use special conveyances, such as palanquins and elephants, to the accompaniment of music, etc., and (3) the claim to be seated near the king.

As regards dress, the sculptures represent, as in India, the upper part of the body above the waist as uncovered, both in the case of males and females. The Chinese accounts, too, refer to similar dress. As is well-known, in Bali, even to-day, the women do not cover the upper part of the body. So this seems to be an old practice, at least in some of the colonies, and to judge from the sculptural representations, it was possibly not unknown even in India.

Religion: The Puranic religion had a strong hold on almost all the colonies. Although Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva were all worshipped, the cult of Shiva was undoubtedly the most popular. Next came Vaishnavism. As in India, the worship of Brahma never atained great popularity. The images of Trimurti, i.e. the three gods combined together, as well as of the composite god Shiva-Vishnu, are found in Java and Kambuja. As a matter of fact the entire Puranic pantheon was known in these countries, and we come across images of Hindu gods and goddesses in their innumerable names and forms as known in India. The mystic philosophy of the Upanishads, and even later outgrowths such as Tantrik rites, can also be traced. Indeed Hindu religion in all its aspects, both canonical and popular, appears in such fullness in these colonies, that to describe it in detail would be to recount at length the religious conditions in India.

The study of Indian religious literature was a special feature of the religious life. An extensive religious literature, based on Indian texts, developed in Java. The inscriptions of Kambuja frequently refer to Brahmanas versed in Veda, Vedanga, Samaveda, and Buddhist scriptures, and kings and ministers possessing a profound knowledge of the Dharmashastra. Arrangements were also made for the daily recitation of *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and Puranas, and it was considered a pious act to present copies of these texts to temples.

Buddhism was also popular, particularly in Suvarnadvipa, that is, East Indies. Although the Hinayana form was prevalent in the seventh century it was almost ousted in the eighth by Mahayana, which had a triumphal career in Java and Sumatra during the period of Shailendra supremacy. It has left undying memorials in the famous stupa of Barabudur and several magnificent temples. Buddhist teachers from Bengal exerted considerable influence in Java, and the Shailendras were in close contact with the Pala kings and such famous Buddhist centres in India as Nalanda. As in the case of Puranic religion, almost the entire hierarchy of the Mahayanist gods make their appearance in Java, not only in identical forms and names, but also with the familiar postures called *mudra*.

Buddhism had also prevailed in Champa. Even as early as A.D. 605 a victorious Chinese general carried away 1350 Buddhist books from this country. From the eighth century A.D. we hear of many kings constructing Buddhist temples and monasteries and installing Buddhist images. The site of Dong Duong indicates the great hold of Buddhism in this country. For its ruins contain the remains of a Buddhist temple far greater in dimensions than the largest Brahmanical temple in Champa, and a fine standing image of Buddha, which is regarded as the most artistic representation of a god so far found in that country.

The Sanskrit inscriptions of Kambuja throw a great deal of light on the religious developments. These inscriptions reflect the life and society in Kambuja and testify to the thoroughness of the Indian cultural conquest of these far-off lands. They prove that the people fully imbibed the tenets and practices, the theology, rituals and the iconography of the various religious sects of India. The numerous temples, images of gods and goddesses and pious foundations show the powerful hold which religion had over the popular mind. But the inscriptions prove something more: they clearly show that there was in Kambuja, beyond the external forms of religion, that higher and deeper spiritual view of life which is the true essence of all religions and formed such a distinctive characteristic of ancient Indian culture and civilisation. These inscriptions reveal a spirit of piety and renunciation, a deep yearning for emancipation from the trammels of birth and evils of the world, and longing for the attainment of the highest bliss and salvation by union with Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. These ideas, which form the keynote of Indian spiritual life, are frequently expressed with beauty and elegance, and in language at once stately and serene.

The inscriptions tell us that the kings usually received their early education from eminent religious Acharyas and members of the family of hereditary royal priests. There are also many instances of kings and members of the royal family becoming high priests and Acharyas. The intermarriage between royal and priestly families was also very common. The predominance of a family, whose members supplied royal priests for 250 years in unbroken succession, is both an index and the cause of the extreme religious outlook of the king and the people.

At least two special circumstances may be pointed out as being mainly responsible for this growth of religious and spiritual life in Kambuja. The first is a constant and intimate contact with India, and the second is the establishment of a series of *ashramas.*

These hermitages were abodes of pious devotees who dedicated their lives to study and meditation. A large number of these institutions existed all over Kambuja. King Yashovarman is said to have founded one hundred *ashramas,* and this is supported by the actual discovery of a large number of inscriptions recording the foundation of individual *ashramas* in different parts of the kingdom. These inscriptions are fairly long, and give detailed regulations for the management of the *ashramas* and the conduct of persons visiting them or living therein. These regulations indicate the high moral and spiritual ideal which inspired these institutions and the great humanitarian spirit in which their actual work was carried on. These *ashramas* remind us of the hermitages in ancient India of which we get such a vivid picture in ancient Indian literature and on which they were evidently based. They formed powerful centres of Indian culture in Kambuja, from which it radiated in all directions and gained in purity, strength, and stability.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that there was a spirit of religious toleration in all the colonies. Although various Brahmanical sects flourished along with Buddhism, there was no animosity between their followers. On the other hand kings and people alike paid reverence to all religious sects. The same king endowed both Shaiva and Buddhist religious establishments or installed images of different sectarian gods. In this respect the Indian colonists maintained the best traditions of their motherland.

Art: Every Hindu colony contains numerous monuments of artistic activity in the shape of temples and images which show distinct traces of Indian influence and inspiration in varying degrees. While some are close imitations, almost replicas, of Indian models, others show refreshing development of local styles by the addition of special, sometimes characteristic, features to Indian ideas. None excels in this respect the Indo-Javanese art which merits a more detailed treatment than the rest.

The earliest temples in Java are those on the Dieng plateau, which is 6,500 feet high and surrounded by hills on all sides. They are Brahmanical temples named after the heroes and heroines of the *Mahabharata,* and belong probably to the eighth century A.D. Although comparatively small in dimensions, these temples and the sculptures in them are characterised by a sobriety and dignity which is usually associated with Indian temples of the Gupta period.

The Prambanan valley contains several groups of important temples. Among the Buddhist temples may be mentioned Chandi* Kalasan, Chandi Sari, and Chandi

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* The religious structures in Java are known as Chandi.

Sevu. The first is a magnificent specimen of temple architecture, and was built by a Shailendra king in A.D. 778 for the goddess Tara. The complex of temples known as Chandi Sevu contains no less than 250 temples with the main temple in the centre of a paved courtyard measuring about 600 ft. by 540 ft.

Still more famous is the Lara-Jongrang group of Brahmanical temples. It consists of eight main temples, three in each row with two between them, with three rows of minor temples making a total of 156. The three main temples in one row contain images of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the Shiva temple in the centre being the most magnificent. The balustrade round the temple contains a continuous series of relief sculptures in forty-two panels, depicting the story of the *Ramayana.* These exhibit a high degree of skill, and may be reckoned among the best to be found in Java.

Midway between the Dieng plateau and the Prambanan valley stands the Kedu plain, which contains a number of fine temples, among which Chandi Mendut and Chandi Pavon deserve special mention as beautiful specimens of Indo-Javanese art.

But by far the most magnificent monument in Java is the famous Barabudur, a colossal structure justly regarded as a veritable wonder by the whole world. It is situated on the top of a hillock commanding a fine view across the plains of Kedu to the distant ranges of hills. This noble building consists of nine gradually receding terraces, the six lower ones being square in plan, and the upper three circular. The whole is crowned by a bell-shaped *stupa,* which stands at the centre of the topmost terrace and is accessible from it by a series of circular steps. The three uppermost terraces are encircled by rings of *stupas,* each containing an image of Buddha within peforated framework. The five lower terraces are each enclosed on the inner side by a wall supporting a balustrade, and the four successive galleries thus formed contain eleven series of sculptured panels depicting the life of Buddha and other Buddhist stories. The balustrade consists of a row of arched niches resembling temples and containing an image of Buddha. There is a staircase with a highly decorated gateway in the middle of each side of the gallery leading to the next higher one.

The most notable feature of Barabudur is its massive proportions. It impresses the visitor with a feeling as if a hillock has suddenly come to view. It is difficult to convey an exact idea of this feeling by measurements alone, but still that is the only concrete way of expressing it. The lowest terrace, including projections on two sides, has an extreme length of nearly 400 ft., and the topmost one a diameter of 90 ft. The temple niches, each containing a fine image of Buddha, are 432 in number. The total number of sculptured panels in the galleries is about 1500.

These figures give some idea of the massive grandeur of Barabudur which strikes a visitor when it first comes to his view. But as he approaches closer to the structure, he is no less deeply impressed by the fine quality of its immense decorations, extensive relief sculptures, and the numerous images of Buddha. It is difficult to name any product of art, either in India or anywhere else in the world, where such a high standard of excellence has been maintained over such an extensive range. This combination of massive quantity and fine quality invests Barabudur with a unique character. It has hardly any parallel in the world, and it may be truly remarked of its artists that "they conceived like giants and finished like jewellers."

The construction of Barabudur may be roughly dated towards the close of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century A.D. when the Shailendras ruled in Java and were the dominant political power in Suvarnadvipa. There is hardly any doubt that this great monument is the result of their patronage.

Although Lara Jongrang and Barabudur have cast into shade all the other structures in Java, many of them are fine specimens of Indo-Javanese architecture, and some of the sculptures, such as those of Mendut and Banon, show perhaps even a greater degree of refinement and delicacy than those of the two justly famous monuments.

Art in Indo-China: The art in Kambuja may be broadly divided into two classes, the primitive and the classic. The primitive art began from the age of Fu-nan (first to seventh century A.D.) and was developed by natural stages of evolution to the classical art which is associated with Angkor and dates from about tenth century. But as most of the materials of Fu-nan were perishable like wood or brick, there are not enough remains to enable us to reconstruct the history of its art. But there is no doubt that the primitive art of Kambuja was purely Indian, and from Fu-nan Indian art of the Gupta age spread over a wide territory in Indo-China along with other phases of Indian culture.

The most famous monuments of Kambuja are Angkor Vat, Baphuon, the temple of Bayon in Angkor Thom, and Bantay Chamar. The old ideas about the period of these buildings have undergone a radical change, and the twelfth century A.D. is now held to be the classic age of Kambuja art.

It is not possible to give detailed description even of Angkor Vat, the most famous monument of Kambuja. An idea of its massive character may be had from its measurement. The moat or ditch surrounding the temple and running close of its boundary walls is more than 650 ft. wide, which is spanned on the western side by a stone causeway 36 ft. broad. The ditch, like the wall of enclosure, which completely surrounds the temple, has a total length of two miles and a half. The broad paved avenue which runs from the western gateway to the first gallery is 1560 ft. long and raised 7 ft. above the ground. The first gallery measures about 800 ft. from east to west and 675 feet from north to south attaining a total length of nearly 3000 ft. The central tower, on the third or highest stage, rises to a height of more than 210 ft. above the ground level.

The famous town of Angkor Thom (Nagaradhama?) planned by Jayavarman VII (A.D. 1181), was surrounded by a high stone wall with a ditch beyond it 330 ft. wide. The ditch like the wall has a total length of nearly eight and a half miles and its sides are paved with enormous blocks of stone. The enclosing wall was pierced by five huge gates which gave access to the city by means of five grand avenues each 100 ft. wide and running straight from one end of the town to the other. Each gateway consisted of a huge arched opening more than 30 ft. high and 15 ft. wide, surmounted by figures of four human heads placed back to back. The town was square in shape, each side measuring about two miles. The grand avenues converge to the Temple of Bayon which occupies almost the central position of the city, and is justly regarded as a masterpiece of Kambuja architecture. To the north of Bayon is a great public square, a sort of forum, about 2300 ft. long and 495 ft. wide, surrounded by famous structures such as Baphuon, the Phimeanakas, the Terrace of Honour etc., each of which forms a splendid monument by itself.

These few details would serve to convey an idea of the massive character of Kambuja architecture. But it is not by massive form alone that they appeal to us. Their fine proportions, the general symmetry of the plan, and above all the decorative sculptures invest them with a peculiar grandeur.

There are also a large number of temples in Champa. In addition to many isolated examples there are three important groups of temples, namely those of Myson, Dong Duong and Po Nagar, the second being Buddhist and the other two Shaivite. These temples are generally built of brick and belong to one standard type. All these forms and types are found in the rock-cut temples at Mamallapuram in Madras, and there can hardly be any doubt that the architectural style of Champa was derived from India. Although Champa cannot boast of such splendid edifices as we find in Java and Cambodia, and her monuments, mainly built of bricks, have mostly disappeared, yet the remains, such as still exist, indicate a fairly developed artistic sense and manual skill of her people.

Literature: The Sanskrit inscriptions discovered in Kambuja, Champa, Malaya Peninsula, and Java leave no doubt that Sanskrit literature, in all its branches, was highly cultivated in all the Indian colonies. We can trace its beginning to a much earlier period. But the large number of Sanskrit inscriptions in Champa and Kambuja indicate very great progress in the study of Sanskrit. Reference has already been made above to religious literature, but even in secular literature the achievements were remarkable. Inscriptions, earlier than the ninth century A.D., refer to many of its branches such as grammar and philology, philosophy, political science (*Arthashastra*), and *Kavya*. King Indra-varman III of Champa and Yasho-varman of Kambuja were accomplished scholars; Yasho-varman's minister was an expert in astrology. All these throw interesting light on the zeal and enthusiasm with which all classes of people, high and low, took the study of Sanskrit.

The cultivation of Sanskrit language and literature reached its highest development in Kambuja during the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. This may be easily deduced from a careful study of the large number of Sanskrit inscriptions composed in beautiful and almost flawless *Kavya* style. Many of these run to great lengths. Four inscriptions of Yashovarman contain respectively 50, 75, 93, and 108 verses each, and two inscriptions of Rajendravarman contain respectively 218 and 298 verses. The authors of these inscriptions give clear evidence of a thorough knowledge of almost all the Sanskrit metres and the most abstruse rules of Sanskrit rhetoric and prosody, intimate acquaintance with various branches of literature such as Veda, Purana, Dharmashastra, Buddhist and Jain literature, different schools of philosophy and *Vyakarana,* specially the works of Panini and Patanjali. Specific reference is made to Vatsyayana and Vishalaksha as the authors respectively of the *Kamasutra* and a book of polity, to the *Manu-smriti,* from which a verse is actually quoted, and to the famous medical treatise of Sushruta. Both the form and contents of the inscriptions indicate a mastery of Sanskrit *Kavya.* An inscription of Rajendravarman contains four verses which are evidently copied from the *Raghuvamsha* with slight modifications. Some inscriptions of Yashovarman refer to Pravarasena and Mayura as the authors of the *Setubandha* and *Suryashataka,* and to Gunadhya as a writer in Prakrit with an allusion to the legend about him contained in the *Kathasarit-sagara.* The inscriptions themselves are sometimes written in such a fine *Kavya* style as would do honour to a reputable Sanskrit poet of India. They certainly excel in literary merits the Sanskrit inscriptions so far discovered in India. As to the legends and mythology, derived chiefly from the Puranas and the epics, and the allusion, alliteration, and simile etc., which usually abound in Sanskrit *Kavyas,* they occur so frequently in these records that their authors seem to be saturated with them.

Such a state of knowledge and proficiency clearly implies a close and constant contact between India and Kambuja. M. Coedes, while editing a Kambuja inscription, has pointed out that it so strikingly exhibits all the characteristic features of the Gauda style, that its author must have been either an inhabitant of Gauda (Bengal) or one who had lived in that country for a long time. As a matter of fact similar remarks may perhaps be made in respect of many other records. On the whole the series of inscriptions may be taken as a definite evidence of the flourishing state of literature in Kambuja and her intimate contact with India.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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INDEX

Abdul Karim Jili 133, 134
Abdul Qadir 182(n), 190(n), 192(n), 207
Abhinaya 33, 35
Abhinaya Darpana 22, 34, 35
Abhiras 143
Abri Said Ibn Abulkhair 133
Abul Fazal 201, 207, 211
Abu-l-Qasim Mahmud 167
Achara 161
Acharyas 123, 127, 129, 177, 234
Achchhan Maharaj 40
Afghanistan 92, 217, 220
Age of Expansion 112, 116, 120, 121
—Resistance 117, 118, 119, 122
—Classical 142
Aghati 4
Adam and Eve, and other biblical scenes 77
Adambara 4, 6
Adaranga 15
Adbhuta 24
Adbhuta-Ramayana 4
Adhyakshaprachara 29
Adil Shahi 136
Adityasena 89
Agra 56, 59, 196, 209, 210
Aharya 37
Ahobala Pandit 15
Ahmed Shah Abdali 204
Ain-i-Akbari 206(n), 207
Ain-i-Dahsala 202
Aitarya Brahmanas 121
Aiyangar, Dr. Krishnaswamy 171
Ajanta 50, 51-55, 69, 72, 73, 75, 149, 170, 209
Ajigarta 116
Akbar 11, 12, 59, 62, 63, 89, 119, 125, 126, 136, 195, 197, 198, 201, 202, 203 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211
Akbar II 195
Akbarnama 207
Akbar The Great Mughal 202(n)
Ala-ud-din Khalji 186, 187
Alauddin, Sultan 11
—gate of 61, 125
Alamkara Raghava 23
Al-Beruni 31, 32, 176, 225
Alexander, the Great 213
Alexandria 214, 215
Alidha 79
Alvars 165, 178
Amaravati 44-47, 71, 72, 76, 77, 169
Amir Khusrau 11
Amir Khusrau (Poet) 192
Amuktamalyada 126
Ananda 19, 24 28
Anandavardhana 164
Anasuya 117
Andhra 92
Angika 37
Angkor Thom 238 239
Angkor Vat 75, 238
Anirudha-grandson of Sri Krishna 21
Antara 9
Antiochus 214
Anuloma 118, 147
Anupasinha 15
Aphrodite 79
Apsaras 3, 28, 79, 80, 81
Aradhya Shaivas 125
Architecture—Mugal 61-65
Arjuna 22, 117
Arnold, Sir Edwin 10
Arthasastra 29, 121, 220, 227, 240

Arundhati 117
Arya 106, 107
Aryans, Coming of 105, 114, 120, 142, 143, 146, 147, 168
Aryavarta 91 122, 124, 155, 159, 160
Asaf Shahi 136
Ashcharyachudamani 164
Ashoka 42, 44, 89, 213, 217
Ashraf K. M. 185, 188(n)
Ashramas 89, 90, 234
Ashtanga 226
Ashta-diggajas 126
Ashvamedha 88, 144, 145
Asiatic Studies 137
Asoka (grove) 75
Asuras 50, 51, 76
Atisha Dipankara 224
Auchitya 23, 24, 25
August 15, 1947 113
Aurangzeb 14, 66, 89, 137, 195, 203 205, 207, 210, 212
Aurobindo 113
Avidya 28
Baba Farid 189
Babur 61, 183, 195, 196
Badami 80, 92, 151
Badarayana 177
Baghdad 56, 156, 225, 226
Bahadur Shah II 195
Baini Prashad 196(n), 206(n)
Bakura 5
Balarama Bharata 22
Balarama Varma 22, 27
Bana 21, 31, 32, 150
Banaras (Benaras) 28, 37, 47, 66
  —Queen of 72, 127, 129, 130 166
Bannerji 40, 192
Bantay Chamar 238
Baphuon 238
Barabudur sculpture 52
  —Bible 73, 76, 77, 229, 236, 237, 238
Basawani 208
Basu, Haladhar 140
Bernier 204(n)
Bhagavad-Gita 129, 165, 175, 177
Bhagavata Mela 26
Bhagavata-Purana 88, 140, 143, 165, 173, 174, 191
Bhagavatar Brahmins 26
Bhagvati 159
Bhaktas 123, 125, 128
Bhakti 9, 11, 24, 128, 135, 175, 177
Bharata *(rishi)* 3, 8, 10, 20
  —Father of Indian Dance 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 34
  —Eponymous author 34 36
Bharata Natyam 23, 25, 26, 37 38, 40
Bharatashastra or *Natashastra* 34
Bharatavarsha, — boundaries & inhabitants 86, 88, 91, 148, 152
Bharhut 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 71
Bhatta Dipika 130
Bhava 24, 33
Bhavabhatta 15
Bhavabhuti 151, 155, 163
Bhayanaka 24, 39
Bheri 6
Bhillamala 156
Bhishma 75
Bhoja 24
Bhoja (Baura) 158
Bhrigu (dynasty) 160
Bhrigukachha 227
Bhumi-dundubhi 4
Bhutan 66
Bhuvaneswar 80
Bilaval 16, 17
Bin 12
Binkars 12, 15
Birdwood, G. C. M. 211(n)
Blockmann, H. 206(n), 212(n)
Bodh Gaya 71, 136
Bodhidharma 223
Bodhisattva 29, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 223
Bodhisena 224, 225
Boticelli's enchanting figures 80
Bowers 37
Brahma 50, 133, 135, 236
Brahmachari 90
Brahmadatta 6
Brahmagupta 225
Brahmarshidesha 91
Brahma-sphutasiddhanta 225
Brahma-sutra 177

Brahmavarta 91, 155, 160
Briggs, Martin S 193(n)
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5
Brihannala 22
Brihat Katha 169, 227
Brindaban (also Vrindavan) 11, 20, 69, 70
Brown, Percy 196(n), 208, 209-(n), 210(n), 211(n)
Buddha 42
  —Receiving adoration as Prince Siddharta 43
  —in Amaravati sculpture 45
  —Gandharvan type 46
  —Birth Legends 71
  —Episodes 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 100, 133, 159, 173, 174, 177, 181, 233, 236, 237
Buddhist teachers in China 222
Buddhist temples in Java 235
Buland Darwaza 62, 209
Burhan-i-Qutib 207
Burhankhan, Raja 12
Burn, Sir Richard 202(n), 203
Burma 26, 66, 220
Calcutta Art Gallery 66
Caliph Hasham 156
Call it Politics? 136(n)
Cambodia 26, 44, 73, 75, 228, 240
Cambridge History of India 182(n), 183(n), 195(n), 196-(n), 197(n), 201(n), 202(n), 209(n)
Castes 90, 106, 138, 229
Chahamanas 117
Chaitanya 36, 41, 104, 127, 129, 1371
Chakravarti 144, 148
Chakravarty, Atulananda 136-
Chakrayudha 157
Chalukya 92, 112, 117, 118, 150, (n), 151, 152, 166, 171, 173
Champa 228, 229, 233, 240
Champus 164
Chamunda 79
Chandeshvara 126
Chandidas 129, 131
Chandra cult 68
Chandragupta Maurya, 89, 144, 146
Charaka 226
Charaka-samhita 225
Chaturdandi Prakashika 13
Chaturvarnya 120, 121, 122, 123, 147
Che-mong 222
Chhandogya Upanishad 5
Chief Craftsmen who built the Taj 56, 57, 58
China 55, 107, 190, 217, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223
Chitra-shala 67
Chola 92, 170, 172
Chow-dance of Seraikela 37
Chu She-king 221
Coedes, M 242
Coomaraswamy, Dr. 66, 73
Cowell and Thomas 31
Cultural centres of Asia 47
Dakhan-ki-Halat 137
Dakshinapatha 116
Damodara Misra 14
Danda 161
Dantidurga 154, 156
Das, Dr. Bhagwan 133
Dasarupaka 22
Dashavatara temple 50
Dara Shikoh 207
Daswanath 208
Day, Captain 16
Dayananda Sarasvati 113
Della Robbias 76, 77
Delhi 56, 59, 64, 92
  —Sultanate 112, 136, 182-194
Devadasis 26, 31, 32, 36
Devadatta 37, 72
Devala 126
Devala Smriti 118, 161
Devanirmitam sthanam 88
Devas 21
Devi 128, 178, 179, 181
Dhananjaya 22
Dhanapala 164
Dharasena IV 151
Dharma 109, 112, 121, 125, 143, 144, 146, 148, 149, 159, 160, 161, 174
Dharmapala 154, 156, 157
Dharmaratna 220
Dharma-shastras 119, 130, 146, 147, 160, 161, 181, 241
Dhruva (Rashtrakuta) 157

Dhvani 25, 26, 164
Dhvanyaloka 164
Didhiti 130
Dighe, V. G. 205(n)
Digvijaya 88
Dindima 6
Dirang Khan 14
Diwan-i-Am 64
Diwani-khas 63, 64
Dontello 76
Drupad 12
Dundubhi 4, 6
Durbari 11
Durga 79
Dvaravati 228
Dvijas 117, 120
Dwarka (Dwaraka, Dvaraka) 21
Early History of India 93
Ekarat 88
Elephanta 50
Eliot 181
Ellora 48-51, 80, 156, 158, 170
Embassies—Indian abroad 215
Esha dharma sanatanah 115
Ettiyapuram Subrama Dikshita 18
Fa-hien 219, 222
Fa-hu (Dharmaraksha) 221
Farang-i-Jahangiri 207
Farhang-i-Rashidi 207
Fatawa-i-Alamgiri 208
Fatehpur 63, 209
Fa-Yong 222
Fergusson 42, 59, 125
Firmans 137
Firuz Tughluq 184, 205
Folk Art—Influence of 22
From Akbar to Aurangzeb 204-(n)
Fustel de Coulanges 114
Ganas 21
Gandhara 228
Gandharan sculpture 43, 44, 47
Gandharva Grama 6
Gandharva-Veda 4
Gandharvas 3
Gandhi 109, 113.
Ganga (river) 72, 116, 156, 165
Ganikadhyaksha (Supdt. of courtesans) 29
Garba 37
Garden of the Great Mughals 196(n), 210(n)
Garhapatya 115
Garrat, K. T. 182(n), 193(n)
Gayatrimantra 162
Geronimo Veroneo-Italian Adventurer 56, 57, 58
Ghata 6
Ghazni, Sultans of 116
—Mahmud 154, 155, 167, 182
Ghiberti—Doors of Paradise 76, 77
Ghulam Yahya bin Ahmad 191(n)
Gita 103, 117, 121, 174, 175, 176
Gita Govinda 9, 27, 41, 125
Godavari 68
Gode, P. K. 190
Gopala 156
Gopinath 40
Gopis 20
Gotra 115, 117
Govinda (Rashtrakuta) III 157
Govinda Dikshit 14
Govinda Marar (Shatkala Govinda) 18
Graeco-Roman influence 45, 47, 54
Gramas 8
Great Revolt of 1857
Grierson, Sir George 207(n)
Griffiths, John 51, 52
Grihastha 90
Grousset 169
Grünwedel, Professor 45, discoveries in the old Buddhist monasteries of Turkestan 43
Gujarat 37, 66, 123, 128, 131, 171, 194
Guna-karma-vibhaga-Shah 121
Gunadhya 169, 241
Gupta 92
—classical age 112, 116, 117, 142, 144, 145, 146, 148, 149, 151, 152, 158, 159, 169, 173, 176, 223
Gurdwara 136
Gurjara 92, 118
Guru 116, 135, 180

Guru Govind Singh 104
Guruparampara 14
Haig, Sir Wolseley 197, 198(n), 199(n), 204(n)
Haji Waris Ali Shah 134
Hammira 125, 131
Hammira Vijaya 125
Handbook of Indian Art 68
Hanuman 75
Harappa 28
Hari 75, 135
Haribhadra 164
Harisheva's Inscription 172
Harivamsa 75
Harsha 89, 150, 151, 155, 158
Harshacharita 31
Harshavardhana 31, 32, 150, 159
Harun-al-Rashid 225, 226
Haskell, Arnold 40
Hasta-mudra 35
Hasya 24
Haridas Swami 11
Havell, E. B. 68
Hellenic Tradition 43, 47, 214
Hinayana 232
Hindu-Muslim Adjustments 132-141
Hindu Renaissance 124-131
Hindusthan 89
Hippalus 214
Hiranyakashipu 50, 51
History of Mediaeval India 182(n)
History of Muslim Rule in India 136(n)
History of Sanskrit Literature 110
History of South India 126
History of the Khaljis 187 (n)
Huien Tsang 150, 180, 219, 222
Hunas 116, 149, 150
Humayun-tomb of 62, 195, 196, 209
Husain-bin-Mansoor Al-Hallaj 133
Hussain Shah 140, 191
Ibn Adham 133
Ibn-al-Arabi 133
Ibn-al-Farid 133
Ibn Hasan 183, 185(n), 200(n), 202, 206(n)
Ibrahim Lodi 183
Ibrahim's Tomb and Taj 58, 59
Ihats 11
India—Fundamental Unity of 85-93
Indian Dance
  —Background 19-27
  —Theory & Practice 28-41
Indian Art—The Moral Role of 71-82
Indian Culture
  —Continuity of 105-111
  —Epochs of 112-123
Indian Painting 66-70
Indian Music 3-18
Indian Music Journal 13
Indian Religion, The Unity of 94-104
Indian Song of Songs 10
Indo-Roman School of Gandhara 45
Indra 3, 121
Indra III 166
Indra (son of Krishna) 173
Indravarman 160
Indravarman III 240
Indrayudha 157
Industrial Arts of India 211(n)
Influence of Islam on Indian Culture 133(n), 182(n)
Iranianism and Ottoman Influence 61
Isfahan 64
Ishanavarman 150, 154, 155
Ishwari Prasad 136(n), 182(n), 183(n), 185, 185(n)
Islam—Miraculous Powers 133
Islamic Polity 184(n), 195(n)
Itihasa 21, 22
Itimadud-Daula (Tomb of) 210
Jacopo della Quercia 76
Jagannatha 14
Jahangir 14, 63, 127, 195, 202, 203, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212
Jaiminiya Brahmana 28
Jaipal 154
Jalal-ud-din Khalji 191
Jambudvipa 91

Jami Masjid, Sambhal 61, 64, 209, 210
Jana 115
Janaka and *Janya* 13
Janamejaya Parikshita 112
Janardanabhatta 15
Jatakas 28, 35, 213, 227
Jatis 6, 8, 9
Jatavedas (Agni) 114
Jauhar 117
Java 26, 44, 55, 73, 75, 160, 229, 232, 233, 236, 238, 240
Jayadeva 9, 27
Jayasimha 173
Jayavarman II 160
Jayavarman VII 239
Jivas 20, 97
Jivatma 181
Jogimara Cave 36, 37
Jones, Sir William 16
Joshi K. B. 190
Juvaid 156
Kabir 100, 127, 129, 130, 131, 135
Kailasa 26, Wonderful Monolithic Temple 48, 49, 156, 158
Kakali 9
Kakari 4
Kali 79
Kalidasa 24, 27, 30, 121, 148, 163
Kalila and Dimna 225
Kalluka 126, 128, 131
Kalyani 92
Kamalakara 130
Kamasutra 30, 241
Kanakamara 164
Kanakangi 10, 15
Kanauj 56, 92, 118, 150, 151
  Age of Imperial 112, 116, 154-167, 199
Kanchi 92, 151, 171, 172
Kandavina 4
Kant 111
Kanyakubja 154
Karma 28, 74
Karpuramanjari 163
Karuna 24,
Kashmir 56, 66, 150, 155, 163, 181, 194, 207, 210, 211
Kashyapa Matanga 220
Kataka 47
Katha 153
Kathak 23, 26, 37, 40, 68
Kathakali 23, 37, 38, 39, 40
Kathakosha 227
Kathasarit-sagara 241
Kaundinya 228
Kautilya 29, 121, 220, 227
Kavindra Sarasvati 130
Kavyamimansa 163
Kavyas 164, 240, 241, 242
Kaye, G. R. 190
Keane, Kissan 130
Kerala Kala Mandalam 40
Khajuraho 80, 158
Khalsa 104
Khanda Deva 130
Khandakhadyaka 225
Kheta 125
Khusrau (Nasir-ud-din) 124
Khwaja Abdus Samad 208
Khwajah Muin-ud-din Chishti 189
Khwand Amir 196
Kinnars 3
Kirtana 17
Kirtivarman 151
Konarak 80
Kovalan 30
Krishashvin 5, 22
Krishna 9, 10, 11, 20, 21, 26, 41, 68, 69, 70, 75, 76, 81, 121, 128, 174, 176
Krishna I 154, 156
Krishna Deva Raya 126, 131
Krishnananda Vyasa 17
Krishnavattam 38
Kshetragna 26, 27
Kuchipudi 26
Kudumiyamalai (Inscription) 9
Kula 115, 116
Kuladharma 103
Kumaragupta I 89, 146
Kumarajiva 221
Kumarila 176, 177
Kusha 6
Kushan 92, 143, 217
Kutub Shahi 136
Lai Haroba 41
Lakshmana 75
Lal, K. S. 187(n)
Lalitaditya 155

Lal Khan 14
Lanka 38, 48, 75
Lara-Jongrang Group 236, 238
Lasya 21, 39, 40
Lava 6
Law, N. N. 140(n), 187(n), 190(n), 191(n), 206(n), 207(n), 208(n)
Legends, in Art 67
Life and Works of Amir Khusrau 192(n)
Lila 99
Lila Suka 129
Lingam 50
Lingayats 125
Lochanakavi 11
Loka Dharmi 25
Low, Sydney 123
Lyall, Sir Alfred 137
Mac-donnel, Prof. 110
Madhavi 29, 30
Madhva 104, 127, 131
Madhyadesha 91, 118, 149, 151, 154, 155, 166
Madhyamika 181
Magadha 116, 120, 142, 144, 149, 150, 222
Mahabharata 6, 34, 73, 75, 88, 121, 140, 148, 149, 153, 173, 175, 190, 220, 232, 235
Mahadeva 4
Mahajana Jataka 6
Mahant Lal Gir 136
Mahayana 48, 74, 164, 232
Mahendrapala 154, 165, 166
Maheshvar 135, 137
Mahipala 165, 166,
Maitrakas 150, 151
Malavika 30, 32
Malavikagnimitra 27, 30
Malaviyaji 113
Mandhata 121
Mandana Mishra 177
Manikkavachakar 7, 178
Manipuri 23, 37, 41
Manrique, Fr. Augustinian Friar, 56, 57, 58
Man Singh, Raja 12, 209
Mantras 112, 120
Manu 115, 119, 162
Manu-Smriti 88, 126, 128, 147, 160, 220, 229, 241
Marshall 193
Masudi 31
Mathai, J 187(n)
Mathas (established by Shankara) 87, 136, 165, 179
Matra 8
Matrikas 159
Matsyapurana 121, 149, 173
Maud Allen 40
Maukharis 150, 151, 155
Mauryas 29, 92, 116, 168, 170, 217
Mayura 241
Max Muller 111
Maya 28, 97, 99
Medatithi 119, 122, 126, 160, 161, 162
Megasthenes 214
Melakartas 14
Merutunga 31
Mihira Bhoja 89, 154, 157, 158, 159, 165, 166
Mihirakula 150
Mimamsa 129, 164, 176, 177, 181
Milinda-panha 227
Minakshi Sundaram Pillai 38
Minhaj-us-Siraj 191(n)
Mir Saiyid Ali 208
Mirabai (Meera) 12, 129, 131
Mirza, Muhammad Wahid 192(n)
Mitra Mishra 130
Mlechchhas 122, 143, 160, 161
Mohenjo-daro 28, 213
Moksha 19
Moreland, W. H. 197(n), 201(n), 202(n), 204(n), 205
Moti Masjid 64
Mridanga 6
Mudrarakshasa 164
Mudduka 6
Mudras 35, 233
Mughal Administration 204
Mughal Administrative Divisions 201
Muhammad Ali Khan 12
Muhammad bin Qasim 182
Muhammad Gawan 191
Muhammad Ghuri 183

Muhammad Reza 16
Muhammad Shah 12, 15, 204
Muhammad Wazir Khan 12
Muharram 137
Mukerji, T. N. 211(n)
Mukhari 10
Mumtaz Mahal (Arjumand Banu Begam) wife of Shah Jehan 55, 56, 58, 59, 210
Munja (Paramara of Malwa) 167
Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh 207
Murasukattil 7
Murchhanas 8
Murshid 134
Muttuswami Dikshita 18
Nabi Khan Binkar 12
Nadi 5
Nadir Shah 204
Nagabhata I 154, 156
Nagabhata II 157
Nagas 143
Nagmat-e-Asaphi 16
Nagarjuna 48
Nagarkirtan 11
Naga Raja 46
Nahusha 121
Nalanda 47, 180, 224, 232
Nalayiram 178
Namadeva 127
Nanak 127, 130, 135
Nanda 121
Nanda Pandita 130
Nandas 116
Nandikesvara 22, 34
Narada 3, 4, 17
Narada Shiksha 9
Narasimhagupta Baladitya 149, 150
Narasimha Mehta 127
Narasimhavarman 152
Narayanapala 158
Nartana-nirnaya 12
Nasir Shah 191
Nata (Actor) 33
Nataraja 20
Natashastra or Bharatashastra 34
Natika 33
Nattuvanars 37
Natya 20
Natya Dharmi 25
Natya Shastra 8, 9, 20, 22, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39
Nayanmars 148, 165
Nayika 79, 80, 81
Nazir Shah of Bengal 140
Nidava 226
Nirguna 175
Nilakanta Bhatta 130
Nirvana 133
Nizam 136
Nizamuddin Ahmed 207
Nrisimha Bharati 130, 131
Nrit, 5, 22
Nritya 19, 21
Nur Jahan 210, 211
Ousley, Sir 16
Padams 26, 27
Padmakirti 164
Paes, the Portugese Chronicler 33
Palai 7, 8
Palas 117, 154, 155, 157, 159, 224, 232
Pallava 92, 144, 145, 149, 150, 151, 152, 169, 171, 172, 173
Pan 8
Panava 6
Pancha-janab 115
Pancharatna—Prototype in the Buddhist Temple of Chandi Sewa in Java 60
Panchatantra 225
Panchayatana 159
Pandavas 116
Panduranga (Dynasty) 160
Panikkars, Niranam 129
Panini 5, 22, 174, 241
Pao-Yun 222
Paper Making as a Cottage Industry 190(n)
Para-Brahma 135
Parama-maha-shabda 6
Paramaras 117, 166
Paramardin 31
Paramartha 222, 223
Paramatma 20, 181
Parampara 103
Parantaka I 164
Parashurama 116, 120
Paraskara Grihya Sutra 117

Paripadel 7
Parvati 21, 48, 75, 79
Pashupati 112
Pataha 6
Patala (Dancer) 28
Pataliputra 92, 145, 156, 214
Patanjali 174, 241
Patta Mahadevi—Santaladevi, the senior Queen and Crowned Queen Consort 32
Pattupattu 7
Peacock Throne 64
Periplus of the Erythraean Sea 227
Perumal Maharaja 18
Pinda 114
Pindadana 115
Pitris 114, 115
Pitri-yajna 115
Plato 105, 111
Pompeii 54
Ponniah Pillai 37
Prabhakara 176, 177
Prabandhas 9
Prabhandachintamani 31
Prachchhanna Buddha 181
Prahlada 50, 51
Prajnaparamita 79
Prakriti 19, 97
Pratap Singh, Maharaja of Jaipur 16
Pratiharas 117, 118, 150, 151, 154, 155, 157, 159
Pratiloma 117, 147
Pratyalidha 79
Pravarasena 241
Prithviraj Chahamana 183
Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule 140(n), 187(n)
Ptolemy 214
Pundarika Vitthal 12, 13, 15
Pulastya son of Brahma 49
Pulakeshin I 89
Pulikesin II receiving Persian Envoys 52, 151, 152
Punjab 66, 204, 217
Purana 34, 86, 88, 146, 152, 153, 158, 173, 174, 232, 241
Purananuru 7
Purdah 119, 139, 188
Purusha 19
Purushapura 92
Purusha Sukta 120
Pushpabhutis 150
Pushpadanta 164
Pushyamitra 89, 116, 121
Pythagoras 5
Qanungo, K. 195(n)
Qutb Minar 192
Qutb-ud-Din Aibak 183
Qutub-ud-Din 119
Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque 192
Rabab 12
Rababiyars 12
Radha 10, 68, 70, 81
Radha-Krishna 41
Raga 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 69, 211
Raga Lakshanas 16
Ragamala 12, 69
Ragamanjiri 12
Raga-ragini-putra 16, 18
Ragatarangini 11, 15
Ragavibodha 13, 15
Raghunatha Shiromani 130
Raghuvamsha 241
Raginis 4, 69
Rajadhiraja 88
Raja of Kottarakkara 38
Rajashekhara 163. 165, 166, 172
Rajasuya 88
Rajatarangini 207
Rajendravarman 241
Rama 6, 26, 38, 39, 48, 68, 75, 76, 120, 174
Rama Amatya 13
Ramabhadra 157
Rama Brahman 17
Ramacharita Manasa 129, 130
Ramakrishna Paramahamsa 113
Ramagupta 148
Ram Mohan Roy 113
Ramanathan 38
Ramananda 36, 127, 130, 131
Ramanuja 104, 127
Ramayana 5, 6, 12, 34, 48, 73, 75, 129, 130, 140, 153, 207, 232, 236
Ramdas 113
Ramgopal 38
Ramprasad 100

Rana Kumbha 125, 126, 131
Raphael 77
Rasa 20, 23, 24, 31, 33
Rashtrakutas 116, 118, 152, 154, 155, 158, 166, 171, 173, 226
Ras-lila 41
Raudra 24
Ravana 26, 48, 49, 75
Razmnama 208
Rembrant 49, 68
Rig Veda 21, 91, 112, 120, 213, 217
Rigarthadipika 164
Rikpratishakhya 5
Rita 109, 143
Romain Rolland 111
Rothenstein 80
Rudolf Otto 175
Sabuktigin 167, 182
Sachau 32
Sadaranga 15
Sadir 26
Saiyid Gesudaraz 189
Sakti 79, 81, 97
Salabhanjikas 80
Samagahs 5, 9
Saman 5, 9
Sama-Veda 5, 232
Samrat 88
Samskaras 162
Samayachare 179
Samudragupta 89, 144, 145, 172, 173
Sanchi 42-44, 46, 47, 71, 73, 76, 80
Sangita 3
Sangita Darpana 14
Sangita Parijata 15
Sangita Rajakalpadhuma 17
Sangita Raja 125
Sangita-Ratnakara 9, 10, 14, 22
Sangita Sara (Epitome of Music) 16
Sangita Saramritam 16, 22
Sankirtan 11
Sannyasi 90, 164
  —Dashnami 179, 180
Sanskrit 91, 123, 128, 129, 130, 148, 153, 164, 165, 166, 169, 178, 191, 192, 206, 207, 219, 221, 225, 233, 240, 241, 242
Santhal Dance 37
Sapta-Sindhu 91, 115
Saran, P. 184(n), 185(n), 186, 187(n), 195(n), 196(n), 201(n), 202(n), 204(n), 205(n)
Sarasvati—Goddess of Art and Learning 3, 79
Sarkar, Sir Jadunath 204, 205(n)
Sarvabhauma 88
Sastri, Prof. K. A. Nilakanta 125
Satavahana 143, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173
Sati 162, 231
Sattvika 37
Satunaka (*Devadasi*) 37
Satyagraha 113
Savati-gandhahasti 32
Savitri 117
Saundarya Lahari 179
Sayana 126, 128, 131
Schrader 114
Shadaja 13
Setubandha 241
Seven Sacred Cities 87
Seven Sacred Rivers 87
Shadragachandrodaya 12
Shah Alam 195
Shah Jahan 14, 15, 55, 56, 57, 58, 63. 64, 195, 202, 203, 206, 207, 210, 212
Shahanushahi 145
Shaikh Salim Chishti 209
Shakespeare 54
Shaktibhadra 164
Shambhu Maharaj 41
Shankara(charya) 87, 104, 127, 159, 163, 164, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181
Sharirardha 115
Sharngadeva 10, 14, 18, 22
Shatapatha 121
Sheo-Kao (Lokattama) 221
Sher Shah's (Tomb) 56, 136, 195, 196, 197, 199, 201, 204
Shilpa Shastras 58
Shiraz 56
Shishunagas 116
Shiva 3, 20, 21, 26, 48, 49, 50,

68, 75, 78, 79, 125, 128, 158, 159, 178, 181, 232, 236
Shivaji 113
Shiva Singh, Raja 11
Shivaskandavarman 144
Shori 15
Short History of Muslims in India 185
Shraddha 115
Shri Chitrodaya Nartakalayam 40
Shridhanya 47
Shri Dharmarajanuja-Vamsha 228
Shrikshetra 228
Shri Mara 228
Shrivastava A. L. 197(n), 198(n), 199(n), 200(n), 201 (n), 202(n), 207(n)
Shrotiya 121
Shrutis 8, 9, 13, 15
Siam 73, 75
Siddhartha, Prince 43, 47
Sikandar Lodi 190
Silalin 5, 22
Silappadikaram 7, 22, 27, 29, 30, 34
Sinan—the celebrated Ottoman Architect 61
Sindhu (River) 86, as *Hindu and Indos* 87
Sino-Indian Rock-cut Caves 223
Sita 75, 117
Sitabenga Cave 36
Sivis, King of 72
Skandagupta 146, 149
Smith, Vincent 52, his essay on Indian Schools of Painting 53, 93, 202, 211(n)
Somanatha (Musician) 13
Souza Fari 137
Smritis 117, 118, 126, 161, 162
Sravana—Belgola 33
Sri Krishna Karnamrita 129
Srimad Bhagvata 75
Sringara 24
Stuart, C. M. Villiers 196(n), 210(n)
Studies in Medieval Indian History 187(n), 195(n), 197(n)
Stupas 45, 46, 73, 74, 236
Suddha-raga 10
Sufism 134, 135
Sugriva 75
Sukanya 117
Sungas 116, 143
Sunthi Venkataraman 17
Suryashataka 241
Sushruta 226, 241
Sutras 5, 22, 117, 176
Suvarnabhumi 227
Svaras 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18
Svaramela Kalanidhi 13
Svararnava 17
Svayambhu 164
Swamy, K. R. N. 205(n)
Syama Sastri 18
Sylvain Levi 33
Syria 56
Tabaqat-i-Akbari 207
Tagore 40, 113
Tagore, Sir S. M. 15, 18
Tailla II 166, 167
Taj Mahal 55-60, 64, 65, 210
Takshashila 47
Tala 9
Tamralipti 227
Tanagra Greek Statuettes 50
Tanappacharya 14
Tandava 21, 39, 40
Tandu—Dancer who taught *tandava* 21
Tanjore (Musical Centre) 16, 17, 22, 26, 27, 37, 128
Tansen 12, 14, 211
Tappa 15
Tara 79, 236
Tarachand 133(n), 134(n), 182(n), 194(n)
Tarpana 115
Thats 15
Tibb-i-Sikandari 191(n)
Tibet 55, 66, 224
Tilak 113
Tiram 8
Tiruvachakam 178
Tiva-karam 8
Todarmal 126, 201
Tondamandalam 172
Toramana 150
Travancore (Music Centre) 18, 22, 27, 40, 177
Tribhanga 79
Trimurtis 159, 232

Tripathi 200
Tughluqs 61, 126, 183
Tukaram 100
Tulajaji 16, 22, 27
Tulsi Das 12, 129, 130, 131, 207
Tunava 5
Turco-Iranian School 62, fusion with Indian 63
Turco-Persian and Indo-Mughal—fusion of Styles 63
Tyagaraja (Tyagayya) 17, 18
Udanavaraya 219
Udvritta-savati-gandhava-rane 32
Ujjain 92
Universal History of Music 18
Upanishads 19, 85, 175, 232
Uma 79
Uttarapatha 116
Vachika 37
Vadivelu Pillai 37
Vagbhata 226
Vajapeya 88
Vakpati 155
Vakatakas 145, 149, 171
Vali 75
Vallabhacharya 104, 127, 131
Vallathol, Mahakavi 40
Valmiki 6
Vana 4
Vanaprastha 90
Vanaspati (a wooden drum) 4
Varahamihira 148
Varnas 89
Varnashrama-dharma 89, 160, 161
Vasubandhu 148
Vasuki 76
Vatsaraja 156
Vatsyayana 30, 241
Vayu-Purana 149
Vedanta 134
Vedas 19, 34, 103, 115, 126, 146, 161, 176, 232, 241
Vedanta Deshika 131
Vedic Index 4
Venkata Madhava 164
Venkatamakhi, Pandit 13
Vibhatsa 24
Vidyadharas 46
Vidyapati 11, 129, 131, 140
Vijayanagara 32, 126, 128, 171
Vijnaneshvara 119
Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) 145, 148
Vikritis 18
Village Government in British India 187(n)
Vina (Lute) 3, 4, 6, 7, 13, 15, 29
Vindhyashakti 144, 145
Vira 24
Vira-rasa 39
Vira Shaivas 125
Virata 22
Vishakhadatta 164.
Vishnu 4, 50, 51, 75, 76, 78, 79, 135, 159, 173, 174, 178, 181, 232, 236
Vishnudharmottara 35,
Vishnuvardhana 152
Vishnu Gopa 172
Vishnu-purana 50
Vishvasphani 144
Vision of India 123
Vivekananda 100, 113
Vrikshakas 80
Vogel 74
Vyakarna 241
Willard, Captain 16
Williams, Monier 91
Wilson (*Vishnu Purana*) 86
Yajnavalkya 119
Yajur Veda 5
Yal 7, 8
Yakshis 80
Yamuna 116, 165
Yashodharman 150
Yashovarman 142, 151, 155, 234, 240, 241
Yoga—Dance is 20, 102, 112, 133, 177
Yuch-chis 143, 217, 221
Yudhisthira 121
Yusuf Adil Shah 187
Zafarnama 208
Zainulabdin, Sultan 136
Zamorin 38
Zendavesta 5

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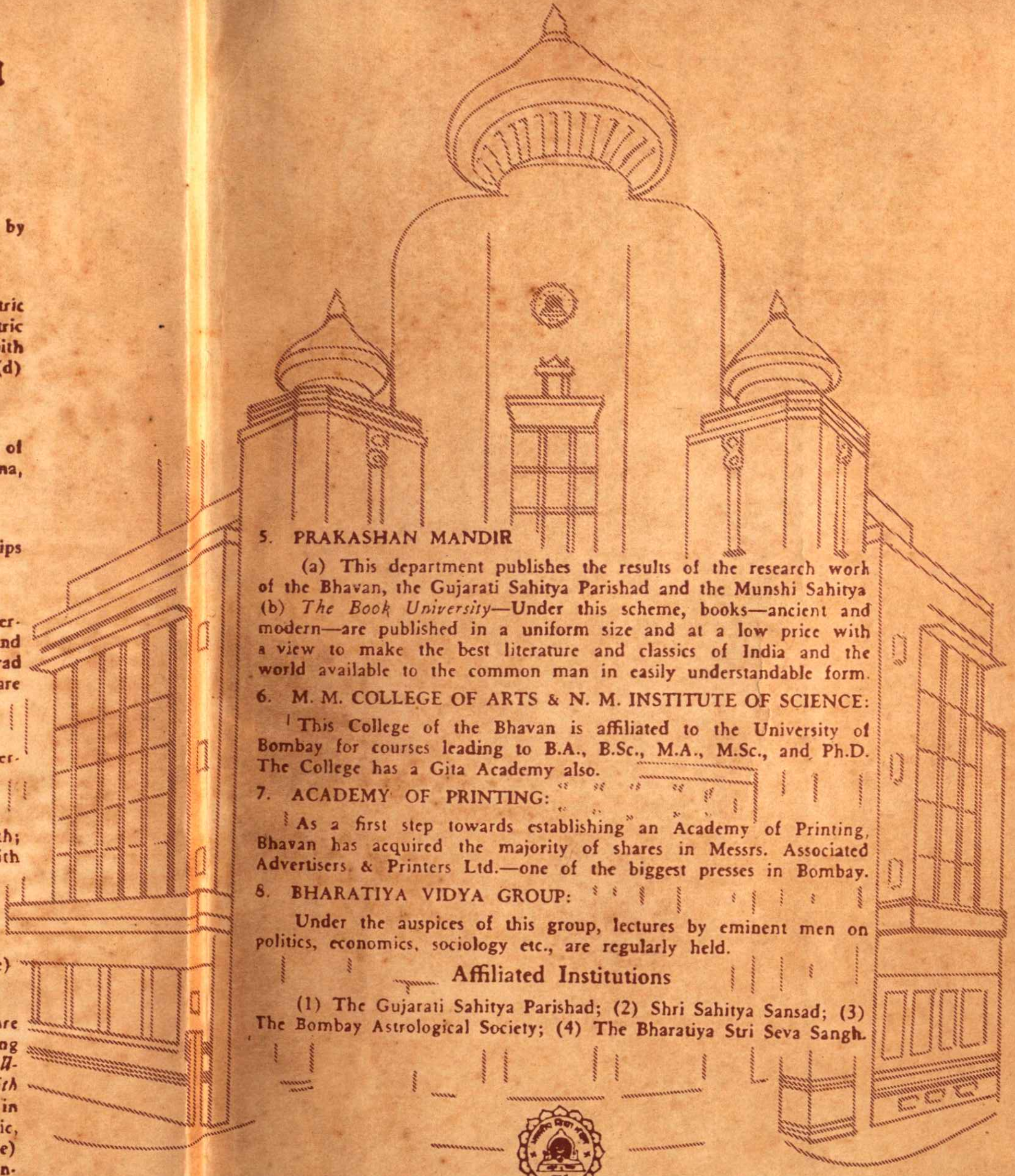

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Indian culture is the eternal bed-rock of India's life of its proud past, its fateful present and its glorious future. A knowledge of the various aspects of this culture is therefore indispensable for our national growth. But mere knowledge of this culture is not enough; what is necessary is to have an emotional awareness of it.

The present volume, like its predecessor, seeks to fulfil a long-felt want; for it is prepared with a view to generating not only an emotional awareness of India's culture, but also to provide spiritual kinship with our glorious heritage.

In this volume, selections from the works of distinguished authors on different aspects of Indian culture have been included. Among them are Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. K. M. Munshi, Dr. K. M. Panikkar, Smt. Rukmini Devi, Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherji, Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, Dr. Baini Prashad, Dr. A. K. Majumdar, Mr. E. B. Havell, Mons. Rene Grousset, and Rev. H. A. Popley.

Although originally it was planned to issue "Indian Inheritance" in two volumes, as the selections proceeded, it was found that another volume was needed to do justice to the subject. Volume I covers **Literature, Philosophy** and **Religion;** Vol. II covers **Arts, History** and **Culture** and Volume III, which will follow soon, will cover **Science** and **Society.**